An Identification of the Meaning(s) of 'Development' in a Chinese Village Context: The First Piece of a Jigsaw Puzzle

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Abstract

This thesis examines the meaning(s) of 'development' within a rural village in Sichuan province, China. The framework used to identify the meaning(s) came from a multi-dimensional perspective of community development that used topics from political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and spiritual areas. It drew upon literature concerning possible themes impacting the cultural dynamics of the Chinese village in China's attempts to form a modern political economy. A menu built up from Western theories of development, Chinese themes of development, and issues that have influenced other villages across rural China in recent years, were used as a guide in fieldwork discussions.

Qualitative research methods—multiple case-studies, in-depth interviews, photography and observations—were used to evoke story-telling responses with rich and deep understandings of development in respondents' daily lives. Within the six month period between December 2010 and May 2011, six households discussed development, and this dissertation is a final account of what development meant from the perspectives of average Han villagers in a single village case study.

The analysis identified the most commonly and intensely discussed themes villagers held as being significant on the topic of development such as food security, alleged corruption, access to markets, education, tourism, and the planned relocation of the village, among others. It also showed that villagers tended to view development in four major ways: 1) as the natural and traditional values operating in their daily lives (such as 'face' and '*guanxi*'; 2) as a trickle-down economics-related view of national growth; 3) as historical improvements in the basic human necessities of life and human dignity (food, clothing, shelter); and 4) as greater personal freedoms and opportunities to create wealth (albeit limited).

Importantly, this thesis is a unique snapshot account containing grassroots stories about what development means from the voice and perspective of average Han villagers in a single village in contemporary rural China.

Statement of Authorship

Except where explicit reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been relied upon or used without due acknowledgement in the main text and bibliography of the thesis.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

> It matters little how much information we possess about development if we have not grasped its inner meaning. Denis Goulet (1971)

1.1 Rationale

Chinese villages have periodically undergone significant upheavals in China's long and tumultuous history, which has been characterised by dynastic cycles, and a significant European invasion that awoke China in the mid-nineteenth century (Fairbank, Reischauer & Craig, 1973; Spence, 1999; Roberts, 2003). A multitude of variables have shaped the Chinese village over time and space, from imperial China, to the twentieth century revolution(s), and to the current reform era (Feuchtwang, 1998). This study starts with the possible patterns of development that most likely influenced the village from a *macro* level (foreign influences), *meso* level (patterns and themes of Chinese development), and a *micro* level (focusing on the diversity of villages in contemporary China).

The historically paternalistic nature of international development and the hierarchical nature of Chinese society have meant that knowledge creation on Chinese grassroots development has overwhelmingly been done from above, from the urban perspective (Fairbank, 1988; Chambers, 2005), yet the world of the Chinese village has traditionally been a subsistence, agrarian and peasant one from below (Fairbank, 1988; Esherick, 2003). Fei (1992) finds that characteristics of Chinese society in imperial times were literally 'from the soil'. Since the end of imperial China in 1911, and more probably since the First Opium War (1839-1842), the West has debatably challenged or altered this notion of Chinese society as fundamentally rural (Spence, 1999; Gregory, 2003). A survey of the literature on contemporary Chinese villages reveals cultural struggles between tradition and modernisation (Cook & Murray, 2001; Unger, 2002; Cook & Qi, 2005; Dang, 2005; Cheng, 2008; Gong, 2008; Oi & Shimizu, 2010). In broad and general terms, over the past few centuries Chinese villages have undergone the stages of self-sufficiency, as a satellite of a Soviet-style centrally-planned system, to being connected with larger global, neo-liberal markets.

Despite significant cultural shifts, there has been no attempt to conceptualise development within a Chinese village context using qualitative case studies. Before the mid-1990s, such an attempt would not have been possible. This ethnographic study aims to lay the first piece of the puzzle. It attempts to identify and interpret—from villagers' stories—meanings of development in a Chinese village, with a research method using the case study (multiple household cases within a single village case), photography, and in-depth interviews as interpretive events. The final case study is a descriptive narrative-analysis—a snapshot—of development within the village.

1.2 Significance of the Study

Several academics have recently promoted the importance of grassroots case studies to acquire fuller, in-depth pictures of development. They call for a greater role for story-telling in development studies (Roe, 1991; Arce & Long, 1999; Lewis, Rodgers & Woolcock, 2008; Carr, 2010). Current concept(s) of development seem to come from national and international development programmes accused of 'creating'/reproducing top-down knowledge with impersonal quantitative approaches (Carr, 2010; Lund, 2010; White, 2010). This study attempts to provide an original, supplementary alternative to top-down approaches by using qualitative research methods inductively.

The development studies literature suggests that the question of the meaning of development is a critical, unresolved question for researchers and practitioners (Sumner & Tribe, 2008; Todaro & Smith, 2009). Since WWII many scholars have pondered its meaning, but it remains an ambiguous concept in the development industry. Whilst this study cannot provide a final, definitive answer, the usefulness of the grassroots qualitative case study for contributing to deeper understandings of development has been gaining momentum (Escobar, 1995; Abram & Waldron, 1998; Arce & Long, 1999; Cooper & Packard, 2004; Gardner & Lewis, 2004; Sumner & Tribe, 2008; Carr, 2010).

The author acknowledges that quantitative studies have offered a breadth of knowledge about China's development. This study does not attempt to compete with or devalue qualitative studies. Indeed, statistics have been used in the literature review. But this study endeavours to open up untold stories and offer insights that may not be explained by statistics. It is a pioneering study in that it lays the foundation for a broader in-depth knowledge of rural Chinese development.

As a single village case study, it is not intended that this research be generalizable. Its value lies in its contextual richness, which enables the findings to be tested in other Chinese villages.

1.3 The Research Question

The research question is stated in the subtitle. It is the first 'piece' of the jigsaw puzzle because it is a single village case study among approximately one million villages; and it is the 'first' because it has not previously been done in rural China. A jigsaw puzzle metaphor has been used because rural China seems to be a multitude of diverse village communities (connected yet exclusive entities). Rural China is an intellectual puzzle. Chapter two highlights the complexity of this puzzle by outlining many theories and themes that may have transformed Chinese villages in a number of ways, to various degrees, over space and time.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review covers the most likely concepts of ‘development’ that have been influential on Chinese villages. It includes a multitude of ideas, events, and theories that may have shaped modern-day villages. Figure 1 shows that it starts with a brief survey of development theory from the Western tradition (the *macro*). The next layer is about the themes of Chinese development single topics (the *meso*). It finishes with possible themes at the local village level (the *micro*) with the use of statistics and specific village studies. Due to the nature of this research it is lengthier than a standard literature review for a doctoral thesis, but it lays no claims to being a comprehensive account.

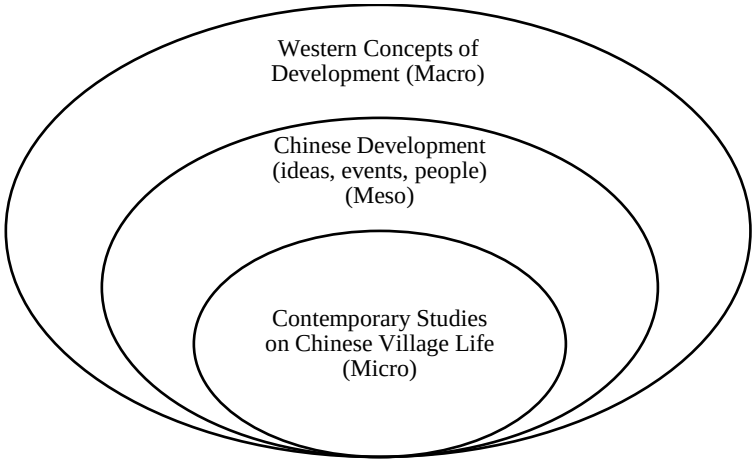


Figure 1 Macro, Meso, and Micro Framework for Understanding 'Development' in the Chinese Village Context

The literature review is organised into four sections as outlined in Figure 2:

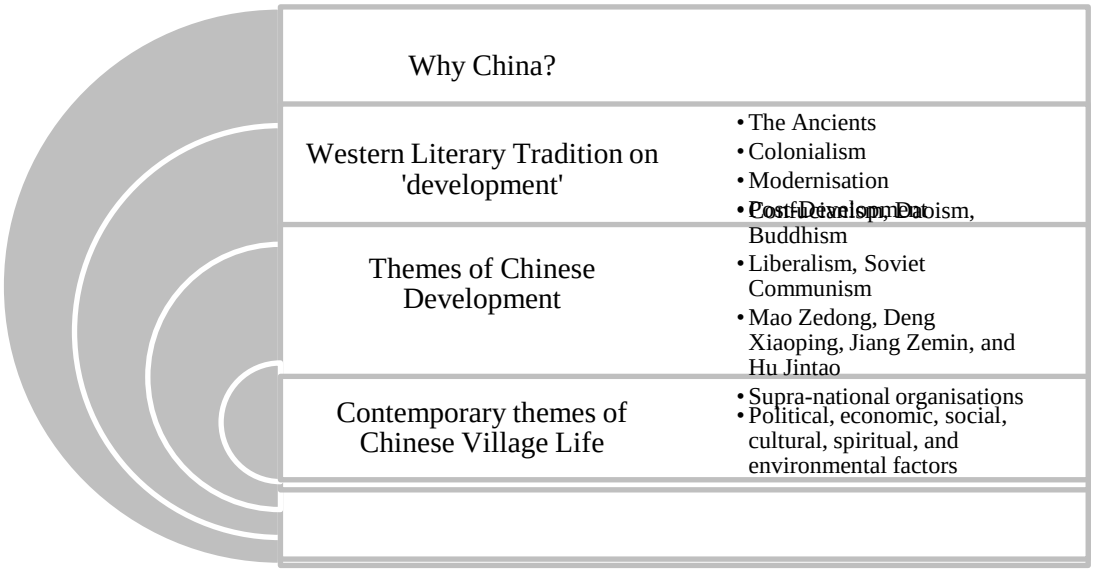


Figure 2 Conceptual Framework of Thesis

Section one is 'Why China?' It is a brief survey of modern China. This section sets the scene for the study and has been included to allow for an understanding of modern China's development story. By acquiring a macro-historical picture of China the reader may start to appreciate the way an average villager perceives development.

Section two outlines some values by which Western nations have come to conceptualise development. It has been included because Western nations were involved with China from the mid-19th century. It is not a comprehensive account, but it is sufficient for this study. The section covers salient shifts in Western development thought, but with a proportionately larger amount of literature on China's reform era. This section poses the question of how Western involvement in China may have influenced the average villager's views.

The third section includes literature outlining the most likely Chinese concepts of development to have shaped the village from a state level. It draws on themes from China's history: from its religio-philosophical imperial tradition; its 20th century revolutionary period; and the reform era.

The fourth section offers rural development statistics and village case studies within the six development dimensions: the political, economic, social, cultural, spiritual, and environmental dimensions. It contains contemporary studies of Chinese villages in areas that may relate to development, but it is not suggested that these studies broadly represent rural Chinese villages. Its purpose is to draw out a general picture of possible development themes at the village level.

The literature review serves as a menu of topics for this study—a guide—to be drawn upon in fieldwork interviews. As topics are tested, the degree to which higher patterns of development have been diffused to average Han villagers in a typical Han village will become clearer.

2.2 Why China? Survey of China's History

> You can make any number of statements about China and they are all true: Things are good, things are bad; China is quite developed, and yet also underdeveloped. Wang Meng. (Gittings, 2005).

China's economic growth over the past three decades has been remarkable, unprecedented. Since Deng Xiaoping opened China to the world in 1978, the economy has grown at an average of ten per cent per annum. There have been many dramatic shifts on China's journey to the present: the Opium Wars (starting in 1839), the birth of the republic (1912); the May 4th Movement (1919), the establishment of the Peoples' Republic of China (1949), Opening Up (1978), and membership of the World Trade Organisation (2001). After many tumultuous years on the modernisation road, the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games was the first chance for this ancient civilisation to announce on the world stage that it was emerging.

But China's long modernisation journey has produced two economic worlds. At the Beijing Olympics the world really only saw the wealthy China, the urban China, the eastern seaboard China. It did not see the poor China, the rural China, the hidden China, the China where the majority of its people live—in the villages. Today there are approximately 650,000 villages (He. B, 2007) and 718 million villagers (UN, 2010) in rural China with interesting stories about their place in China's development miracle.

As the Chinese government steers its nation forward it is mindful of the role that countryside peasants played in the twentieth century revolution; the resurgence of nationalism; the Beijing and Chengdu (indeed nationwide) protests of June 1989; internet political activism; its legitimacy; the sustainability of its booming economy; the urgent need to address the divide between rich and poor (including income disparities between various regions); the after effects of the Global Financial Crisis; and how it is to engage diplomatically with the rest of the world (Saich, 2004; Weatherley, 2006; Guthrie, 2008; Shirk, 2008, Fewsmith, 2010).

Why China? The transformation of this ancient civilisation is indeed fascinating, a society that has been built from strong agricultural foundations, from the village soil. There is no better place to learn more about China's development story than in the untapped, hidden world of the village—from the stories of the average Han villager—particularly in light of China's amazing reform era boom.

The first part of this literature review looks at China's modernisation with a brief summary of twentieth century China.

2.2.1 Ways of Looking at China's Twentieth Century History

Traditionally, scholars have tended to look at China's last century as a series of contingent events, as a series of revolutions. According to Wasserstrom (2003) however, some are now viewing China's twentieth century revolution as a continuum of national liberation. The Chinese

Revolution can now be understood from a vertical dimension (differentiating state and civil society) and also from a horizontal dimension (across geographic regions). Fairbank (1988) extensively surveyed the vertical dimension and Esherick (2003) studied at the latter. Esherick (2003) proposes that the Chinese Revolution was a multiple overlapping of micro revolutions across China at given periods, and not necessarily one larger political cause and ideology. Liu C. (2007) supports the localised nature of the Chinese Revolution by suggesting that although it succeeded in the first half of the twentieth century in the North China region, it failed in the Yangtze Delta region based on local historical, economic, political, social and ecological factors (Liu C., 2007). Recent literature indicates that socialist political development across China may not have been as uniform as was perhaps once thought but rather regional or localised right down to the village level itself.

Duel revolutions

One vertical dimension theory is the history of duel revolutions. Fairbank (1988, p.23) considers that not only was a Chinese revolution occurring at a state (town) level, it was also happening in countryside villages dating back as far as 1800. According to Fairbank (1988), the revolution from above was about remaking the Chinese state, and the revolution at the bottom was to do with the maintenance of household livelihoods and wellbeing.

To understand the common people it is suggested that a grasp of China's historical events and its leaders is essential (Fairbank, 1988). In *The Great Chinese Revolution 1800-1985* Fairbank (1988, p. 11) suggests that "there is no substitute for building history on a factual basis of events and the leaders of events before one goes on to understand the common people". This literature review starts with a brief history of the revolution from above to begin to understand the present-day Chinese village context.

Dynastic Cycles

Another vertical dimension theory is dynastic cycles. Researchers studied patterns of the rise and fall of China's dynasties and correlated this with the relationship between centre (the rulers) and periphery (the peasants) (Chesneaux, 1973; Wiethoff, 1975; Fairbank, 1983; Wills, 1994; Roberts, 2003).

Traditionally, the centre related to the periphery based on class and occupational status. Chesneaux (1973) suggests that the centre devolved power through class structure throughout history, but the class order has shifted (see also Potter, 1983). Wiethoff (1975) noted that during the Zhou Dynasty (1122-256 BC), for example, the order of class order was civil service (warriors in earlier times), farmers, craftsmen, merchants, but that in other times and in different regions the merchants came second to the warriors (see also Stover, 1974). Classes falling outside these

occupations were not considered to be within traditional Chinese society, for example, singing girls, actors, musicians, barbers, serfs and executioners (Wiethoff, 1975). These outlawed classes were referred to by the Chinese rulers as *fei*, which means 'bandit'.

China's rulers maintained order according to the 'Mandate of Heaven', so as long as the monarchy ruled righteously, order was sustained. However, when rulers became corrupt, Confucian doctrine legitimised rebellion (civil disobedience and/or revolution), and the ruled could rightfully overthrow the regime to re-establish the Heavenly Mandate (Chesneaux, 1973; Wakeman Jr., 1975). The list below outlines the twelve phases that each Chinese dynasty went through in its ruling cycle (Ching 1974, p. 78; Wills 1994, p. 35):

1) A new ruler emerges and unites China (under the Mandate of Heaven)
2) China goes through a new age of economic prosperity
3) This causes a population increase
4) The ruling dynasty becomes corrupt, instability ensues, and it begins to decline
5) A natural disaster occurs affecting farming land and livelihoods (this is accentuated by overpopulation and corruption), causing a famine
6) The people rebel due to the famine and a civil war begins
7) The Mandate of Heaven is lost
8) The population declines due to civil war
9) China enters a warring states period
10) One state gains victory and the leader takes charge
11) A new empire is formed under the new leader
12) Mandate of Heaven is re-established

The theory of Chinese dynastic cycles raises the question of whether it is still a valid concept in the minds of villagers today in spite of China's modernisation (Jenner, 1992). It is possible that some villagers may still believe—whether in part or in whole—that this traditional view of relating to the centre remains appropriate.

2.2.2 Chinese Modernisation: West meets East

Some scholars pinpoint the start of China's twentieth century revolution(s) back to the 1839 -1842 Opium War, when Qing rulers clashed with Britain over unequal treaties (Fairbank, 1983; Spence, 1990; Roberts, 2003). While scholars have highlighted Britain's brutality in its dealings with China (Latourette, 1964; Harrison, 1967), Fairbank (1988) offers an alternative view by downplaying the British role and placing the onus on an out-dated, non-Han, Qing administration that was ill-equipped to cope with global realities. Spence (1990) notes that the Opium War showed Chinese rulers that they were not the universal kingdom and that there were more

powerful nations beyond China's border. The opium wars ended with Qing rulers acquiescing to the opium trade to become willing distributors for revenue, and later opium producers, after acknowledging China did not have the military might to match Britain,.

China's weaknesses eventually led to the Qing Dynasty's decline. Opium Wars led to the Taiping Rebellion (1850-64), which was an overthrow attempt by an obscure Christian sect (Jenner, 1992). Several decades later (1894-5) China was defeated by the Japanese. Following this defeat, Manchu rulers blamed 'foreign imperialists' for its failures, which sparked the 1900 Boxer Rebellion (Spence, 1990). The dynasty's strategy of inciting the Boxers—an anti-dynastic, secret society of peasants—against foreigners showed that it had lost its way (Bianco, 1967). In 1905, the Confucian-Manchu state effectively ended with the abolition of the imperial exams (which had been the instrument by which talented scholars entered into the public service through Confucian teachings for centuries) (Spence, 1990).

2.2.3 Birth of the Republic

When the Manchu Dynasty abdicated in early 1912, Chinese intellectuals wanted the new republic to be something like the United States or French model (Fitzgerald, 1964). Yet the republican revolutionary leader, Sun Zhongshan (commonly known as Sun Yatsen in the West), although being Western educated, did not have a liberal democracy vision, but a utilitarian vision of national liberation (Fitzgerald, 1964; Fairbank, 1983). In *The Three Principles of The People* (1924), which Sun later wrote to guide China's reconstruction with nationalism, democracy, and livelihoods, he writes, "There is a difference between the European and Chinese concept of freedom. While the Europeans struggle for personal freedom, we struggle for national freedom".

In 1912, China's republican leaders faced the dilemma of a great divide between centre and periphery (Harrison, 1967). While it was thought that a parliamentary democracy might put centuries of warlordism to rest, it did not eventuate. With the assassination of a major political party leader, and with Yuan Shikai (the provisional president) banning that party, hopes for a parliamentary democracy faded.

2.2.4 May Fourth Movement

The May 4th Movement was a protest by Chinese professors and students for a cultural renewal and literary revolution to end Confucian culture (Bianco, 1967). It was sparked by the 1919 Versailles agreement, which left the former German concession of Shandong in the hands of the Japanese. On May 4, 1919, representatives from Beida University and other institutions in Beijing drafted five resolutions which:

1) Opposed the granting of Shandong to the Japanese under former German concessions.
2) Drew awareness of China's precarious position to the masses in China.

3) Recommend a large-scale gathering in Beijing.
4) Promoted the creation of a Beijing student union
5) Called for a demonstration that afternoon in protest against the terms of the Treaty of Versailles (Spence, 1990)

On May 4, 1919 three thousand student demonstrators converged on Tiananmen Square, beat the Chinese Minister to Japan and burned the house of a pro-Japanese minister. Merchants went on strike, and a nationalist spirit spread among intellectuals: prisoner numbers grew (Spence, 1990; Fairbank, 1988). Seizing an opportunity, the 1920s became a decade in which the United States promoted Western democracy in China within the growing intellectual movement by higher education funding and initiatives (Spence, 1990; Fairbank, 1988). The May 4th Movement was the beginning of the New Culture movement which ignited the Nationalist Revolution.

As the New Culture Movement matured, Chinese intellectuals played with various Western political theories. Theories put forward to address the political climate included Marxism, Liberalism, and Anarchism (Bianco, 1967; Crossley, 2010). Fairbank (1988) indicates that although Russian influence in China in the 1920s was minimal, and that of the Americans was strong, the latter's push for liberal education did not reduce concerns that warlords would cause strife under a liberal democracy system. With the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (formed in 1921) holding ascendency over the weakening Nationalists by the end of the 1920s, Marxism took hold in China (even though it did not really fit with China's agrarian culture). However, the communist party believed that Marxism was the most appropriate ideology with which to battle the realities of Warlords and foreign imperialism, and to form China into a modern state system.

2.2.5 Nationalist Revolution

With the death of Sun Zhongshan in 1925, Jiang Jieshi (commonly known as Chiang Kaishek in the West) took control of the Nationalist government. In 1926, Jiang led a Northern Expedition from Guangdong to Nanjing, to demolish the Warlords and unite China. However, by the end of 1928, Chiang had failed to solve the Warlord problem, and in 1927 he had also broken the Nationalist alliance with the CCP (after finding it had been working with underground gangs in Shanghai to destroy the CCP-led labour unions) (Bianco, 1967). In 1928, Jiang's government coexisted with warlord elements, and he faced a predominantly peasant population of 400 million (Fairbank, 1988). While the Jiang-led nationalist government appeared to be the future of China, from 1928 to 1937 it failed to connect with villages and its plans and legislation were at odds with provincial warlord governors and urban chambers of commerce. In hindsight, Jiang was too focused on the nation building at the urban/town level and ignored the masses.

On the other hand, Mao and the CCP were harnessing peasant nationalism in villages, with the masses (Spence, 1999). During the Second World War, CCP-led communist-peasant nationalism gathered momentum to fight off the northern Japanese advance. The Guomindang (GMD) and the

CCP were by now fighting a two-pronged war against Japan and each other: with the GMD based in Chongqing, and the CCP in Yanan. It was Mao's effective guerrilla tactics against the Japanese that encouraged the peasant nationalist momentum. By 1945, the CCP had increased membership to 1.2 million, with a fighting force of 910,000 (Fairbank 1988, p. 245), while the GMD had failed to win the provincial warlords. It did not take the CCP long to defeat the GMD in the 1945-1949 civil war. Mao established the Democratic People's Republic of China in Beijing on October 1, 1949, and commenced long-term plans for a New Democracy.

2.2.6 Communist Revolution

Mao's New Democracy, however, was not so democratic. Nation-building failures started with the Korean War (1950-1953), when Mao accused the United States of invading North Korea, of starting the war (Fairbank, 1983). This caused a major rift between China and the U.S. that would last for two decades, and it left Mao with no option but to form a reluctant and begrudging alliance with Russia. China's First Five-Year Plan (1953-1957) was therefore fashioned under the Soviet Union model of industrialisation, which Mao eventually deemed unsuitable for China's situation (Schramm, 1989; Lynch, 2004). Accordingly, Mao initiated an economic plan, the Second Five-Year Plan, called the Great Leap Forward (1958-1962) which was an attempt at de-industrialisation and a move towards China's roots of agrarian subsistence, and backyard steel production (Spence, 1999; Guthrie, 2008).

During the Great Leap Forward were the 'Three Bitter Years' (1959-1962) or the 'Three Years of Natural Disasters', mainly famine. It was a huge disaster (Mao was shown up as an amateur economist), as China's encumbered political development caused a famine that killed somewhere between 15 and 45 million people (Guthrie, 2008; Dickötter, 2010). In 1957, Mao launched a One Hundred Flowers campaign to allow free speech and criticism, but some suggest that this was a plan to identify intellectuals and party members opposed to agricultural reforms (Fairbank, 1988; Schramm, 1989). These disastrous years diminished Mao's power and he was forced to resign as Chairman of the PRC. Nevertheless, he stayed on as Chairman of the Party: Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqui became China's new leaders, but Mao really remained number one.

2.2.7 Cultural Revolution

By 1964, Mao had initiated a Social Education Movement, or the 'Four Clean-ups Movement', aimed at the cleansing of politics, economics, ideas, and organisation; but this was really an attempt to attack political rivals (Guthrie, 2008). With Mao's power sliding out of control, sensitive to any criticism, on May 16, 1966, he launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which involved a campaign to rid China of the Four Olds: old customs, old culture, old habits, old ideas (Spence, 1999; Guthrie, 2008). What ensued was an attack on China's cultural heritage: architecture, literature, paintings and antiquities. Mao formed the Red Guard (a

mass movement of civilians, mainly students) to humiliate and even kill the bourgeoisie and intellectuals, and destroy anything deemed foreign or against Party line, such as religion and, effectively, democracy (Lattourette, 1964; Schramm, 1989; Lynch, 2004). Popular slogans included calls for "breaking down the four olds, setting up the four news" (a new interpretation of the Four Olds); and "beating down" the 'bad elements', 'imperialism', 'foreign religion', 'Jesus following', and 'the counter revolutionists' (Lyall, 1969; Spence 1990, chap. 21). From 1966 to 1976 an estimated 35,000 people had been executed as counter-revolutionaries, and thousands of others placed into re-education camps as punishment (Fairbank, 1988, p. 320). The disaster of the early years of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution caused power struggles between 1969 and 1976, which ended with the arrest of the Gang of Four (Jiang Qing, Zhang Chungqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen) for treason. Mao died late in 1976.

2.2.8 Reform Begins

After Hua Guofeng's two year interregnum—during which he advocated a continuation of Mao's social and economic policies—China's transition from traditional ways to modernisation essentially began (Guthrie, 2008). In 1978, Deng Xiaoping took control of the CCP, and immediately set about economic reforms, with the mantra of 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics', even though it was a move towards capitalism (Guthrie, 2008). At the same time a democracy movement was emerging: critical of the Cultural Revolution; calling for political liberalisation (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006). Deng began China's reforms with the agricultural sector policy of the 'Household Responsibility System' which allowed farmers to sell surplus produce on the open market. He also instituted the Open Door Policy which allowed for greater international trade and foreign direct investments (Spence, 1999). While these initiatives proved largely successful, by the mid-1980s the economy started to slow. Government graft and corruption was rife, and inflation had become a problem (Fairbank, 1988).

Deng's reforms stalled by the late 1980s and were threatened by the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989. Many Chinese students, who had by the mid-1980s become increasingly influenced by the Western democratic tradition, believed that China's backwardness was due to a lack of democratic freedoms (Spence, 1999). By May 1989, the democratic wind had intensified and saw a million students converge on Tiananmen Square to demand democracy and freedom (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006: p. 428). After several government warnings, the students refused to disperse, and went on a hunger strike: this determined resistance by students saw an estimated thousand protesters killed in a severe crackdown on June 4 (Mackerras, 1995). The government's public statement regarding this 'incident' was that it was a small 'counter-revolutionary' group causing a minor disturbance (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006). While China set about economic modernisation, its political development remained static, still about maintaining central power.

2.2.9 World Trade Organisation, Globalisation, and Contemporary China

China's acceptance as the 143rd member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001 was effectively its second opening up. It agreed to cut average tariffs from 24.6 per cent to 9.4 per cent by 2005 (Guthrie 2008, p. 300). Whilst it exposed many industries to global competition, China's WTO entry gave it the opportunity for greater global integration in a rules-based system, rapid economic growth, and greater resources to address the inequality gap between urban and rural areas (World Bank, 2004; Guthrie, 2008; Schiere, 2009).

China has emerged as a leading economy over recent decades, and continued its exceptional growth rates since its entry to the WTO. In 2010, it had 10 per cent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP)—up from 3.8 per cent in 2000 (Hu A. 2011, p. 151). With economic growth rates of 9.1 per cent (2002), 10.0 per cent (2003), 10.1 per cent (2004), 10.4 per cent (2005), 11.1 per cent (2006), and 11.4 per cent (2007) (UNDP, 2007/8), and with a 10.9 per cent GDP growth rate between 2000 and 2009 (World Bank, 2011), globalisation has been a major boon.

Chinese Government statistics suggest that it significantly reduced, and is on the path to reducing, its historically troublesome urban-rural inequalities. It reported in 2005 that absolute poverty in China declined from 65.4 million in 1995, to 32.1 million in 2000, and 26.1 million in 2004 (MFA, 2005). This is a remarkable figure given that it had the 1978 figure of 250 million people in absolute poverty. (The absolute poverty it refers to is the 'less-than-one-dollar-a-day' benchmark created by the World Bank in the mid-1990s). The central government's strategy is to reduce extreme poverty to less than five million by 2020 (Hu A. 2011).

Nevertheless, China's 2007 Gini Index was 46.9, which indicates that the distribution of wealth within China is a serious problem[1], even though the UN (UNDP, 2010) has 41.8 as the 2000-2010 figure. In 2004, the richest 20 per cent earned 51.9 per cent of the income, and the richest 10 per cent earned 34.9 per cent of the income, compared with the poorest 20 per cent earning 4.3 per cent, and the poorest 10 per cent earning 1.6 per cent (UNDP, 2007).

With China's modernisation at full steam, future urbanisation trends look likely to continue, with the rise of megacities inevitable. A recent study indicates that an estimated 8.5 million peasants migrate to China's urban centres each year (Watts, 2006), with a forecasted 764.2 million (54 per cent) urban-living Chinese by 2020 (PECC, 2003). Urban centre transformation has been remarkable (Naughton, 2010). Steingart (2008, p. viii) described a recent visit to Shanghai in war-like terms whereby he sensed its determination to outrival any Western city:

> The rooftop terrace at M on the Bund, one of Shanghai's finest restaurants, offers an excellent view of the finest district, including the futuristic Shanghai Stock Exchange building, which looks like a recently landed

[1] The Gini Index scale ranges from 0 (absolute equality) to 100 (absolute inequality).

> ship. The diners on the restaurant's terrace are rich and self-confident, and the prices on the menu (which don't seem to trouble any of the guests) can easily hold their own with anything New York or Washington, D.C., has to offer. Downtown Shanghai, with its traffic jams, its constant buzz of commerce, and its colorful entertainment districts, says more about today's China than the Chinese Communist Party could ever express. And the message that it conveys is simple: We have arrived!

Even in China's poor western region, phenomenal growth is taking place in urban centres such as Chongqing, which has now taken over from Shanghai as China's largest city. Watts (2006) considers Chongqing to be 'the fastest growing urban centre on the planet'. Chongqing's rapid expansion may be explained by the concern that the CCP has had for Western China since 2000, and particularly by the concern that Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao have had since commencing their leadership in 2003. Between 2000 and 2008 the Chinese government spent 1 trillion *yuan* (US$125 billion) on Western China's development, which included 250,000 kilometres of highway and 4000 kilometres of railway (Sachs, 2008, p. 235).

CCP policy to 'go west', to develop the west, however, may be less to do with economic development, and more out of fear of peasant revolts (Navarro, 2008; Wasserstrom, 2009). Official Chinese statistics indicate that from 1993 to 2005, protest numbers rose from 8,700 to 87,000 (Perry 2010, p. 11). Navarro (2008, p. 111) reports that over the past decade, China has been coming "apart at the seams", with approximately 100,000 riots annually. He writes:

> Across the broad expanse of China, peasants with pitchforks are protesting illegal land seizures, forced evictions, a crushing tax burden, rampant government corruption, and the transformation of their once-idyllic lands into polluted cancer factories. China's workers are revolting over everything from slave-labour conditions and stolen wages to the most dangerous working conditions in the world. Tens of millions of castoff senior citizens are rising up against the loss of their pensions and the outrageous cost of health care. Meanwhile out in China's wild west, ethnic tensions are boiling over into armed conflict. (Navarro, 2008, p. 112)

Globalisation has been good for the Chinese economy, but it has arguably created a dynamic, uncertain and a more unequal China.

2.2.10 Summary

If one looks hard at Chinese history—even on the basis of this thumbprint—a number of patterns appear and reappear as part of the fabric of that which makes up China:

1) The relationship between centre and village
2) The concept of the cyclical nature of Chinese history
3) China's relationship with the outside world
4) Authoritarian centralism versus decentralisation
5) Modernisation (change) versus tradition (stability)

It is not suggested that these factors play a direct role in the conceptualisation of development at a village level, but what is interesting is how China seems to be such a mixture of often contrasting Chinas and factors. Do the concepts of tradition versus change, for example, play a part in village conceptions of development? What does China's history mean for the average Han villager's

views on development in a contemporary village context? The answer is not clear but the idea is tantalising.

2.3 Theories of 'Development' in Western Literary Tradition

2.3.1 Introduction

The next part of the literature review focuses on Western theories of development. It looks at common theories within four periods of Western development history. These categories are: The ancients, Colonialism, Modernisation, and Post-development. It is a brief survey to highlight the roots of contemporary Western development theories, with the view of determining whether any have been diffused to the modern-day Chinese village.

2.3.2 The Ancients: Development as Nature

Several scholars identify development theory beginning with Aristotle and the Greek tradition. Pieterse (2010) suggests that the ancient Greeks were obsessed with the concept of the reconciliation of 'permanence' and the 'appearance of newness' (alterity) (Rist, 2002; Pieterse, 2010). They undertook scientific enquiry with a combination of mythology and philosophy: mythology explained the evolution of nature as being cyclical (growth, apogee, and decline). For example, Rist (2002) says that the ancients understood the cultivation of wheat through the story of an earth goddess's daughter who had been abducted into the Underworld where she would stay for a short while before returning to the natural world. The story explained the cycle through the planting of the seed in the soil, the growth of the plant, and a return to the soil. Rist (2002) notes that Aristotle (384-322 BCE) later made a distinction between history and science. Ross (1966 in Rist, 2002) explained the Aristotelian development theory ('nature') as follows:

> (1) The genesis of growing things [literally: which participate in the phenomenon of growth; and (2) 'that immanent part of a growing thing from which its growth first proceeds.... Nature in the primary and strict sense is the essence of things which have in themselves, as such, a source of movement ... and processes of becoming and growing are called nature because they are movements proceeding from this' (p. 29).

Aristotle viewed the study of science according to nature, which was studied as growth apart from history, and it was also considered as separate from human activity. Moreover, nature was studied according to its end, which meant that the State was not to be studied according to political power games between actors within it, but by its 'natural reality'. The natural history of a State was about the way institutions should be, on what was necessary for development.

The next notable shift in development theory came during the decline of the Roman Empire, through the writings of Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430) (Rist, 2002). Augustine attempted to reconcile the philosophy of history with Christian theology, particularly the 'providence of God' and the 'history of salvation'. The common idea that he held with Aristotle was the birth, growth, and decay cycle, but where he departed was on the "return of the same" in that cycle (Rist, 2002, p. 34). The Augustinian view of development asserts that historical events are a part of God's

plan. While Saint Augustine understood the development cycle as being continuous, Aristotle believed that it was a series of discontinuing cycles. With these two Ancients, Western development theory had based its foundations in the idea of history as a linear progression (Peet, 2009).

There was then a long gap until the notion of 'modernity' arose. During the Middle Ages Aristotelian and Augustinian theories remained dominant ideas, but by the sixteenth century the term *modernus* was being used to distinguish the Ancients from the Moderns (Pieterse, 2010). Pieterse (2010) suggests that this dichotomy was used to keep the superstition of the Middle-Ages out of the 'modern'.

What emerged by the eighteenth century was the theory of development as progress, which was a departure from the birth/growth/decline cycle of the Ancients (Pieterse, 2010). During this century, thinkers (such as Leibniz 1646-1716) found that ancient ideals of the laws of 'nature' and God's plan were too limiting, and faith in the rationality of humankind to achieve infinite progress more appealing (Rist, 2002). An emphasis on the history of humankind diminished, and a greater focus was given to individual experience (through thinkers such as Fontenelle) (Rist, 2002). Buffon (1711-1776) and Condercet (1743-1794) became strong advocates of the theory of 'progress', while Rosseau (1712-1778), Ferguson (1723-1816), and Hume (1711-1776) rejected and opposed its advance.

As the theory of progress gathered momentum over the eighteenth century, it culminated with ideas of 'the grand narrative' (Rist, 2002; Leys, 2004). The idea of the grand narrative became connected with growth and wealth, and by the end of that century a piece of literature that would influence the Western world for years to come was published: *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of The Wealth of Nations* (1776) by the Scottish moral philosopher Adam Smith (1723-1790). Smith advocated that all humans had a 'self-interest' and the inherent nature to trade (Peet, 2009). He wrote: "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, brewer, or baker that we expect our dinner, but from regard to their own self-interest (Peet, 2009). In this publication the development theory of the free market was born.

2.3.4 Colonialism: Saving the Savage

The nineteenth century was a period in which the crystallisation of social evolution theory occurred: derived from the 'rational man', infinite progress, and the grand narrative (Rist, 2002). The West, now highly industrialised tended to view its civilisation as the superior path to development. Western development theory was now considered universal, so Western empires perceived themselves as exemplars for the 'uncivilised' (Ferguson, N. 2003; Cooper & Packard, 2004; Willis, 2011). In practice, the theory of evolutionary human progress meant that 'the civilised' needed to help transform backward, primitive savages into a civilised, modern breed

(Ferguson, 2004; Pieterse, 2009; Willis, 2011). Several scholars indicate that it was the theory of social evolution that underpinned the state developmental colonial structures of Western empires by the nineteenth century (Lange, 2009; Hewitt, 2009).

The theory of evolutionary progress is linked to several thinkers. Rist (2002, p. 41) identifies the proponents of this theory as: 1) Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who believed that humankind had gone from a theological and metaphysical stage to a positive stage of knowing based on scientific knowledge (through the verification of facts with evidence); 2) Karl Marx (1818-1883), who believed that humankind progressed through the stages of the feudal, capitalist, and communist; and 3) Lewis Morgan (1818-1981), who believed that humanity progressed through the stages of savagery, barbarism, and civilisation. Under this theory, human history was one history, with each nation progressing at different paces and stages of development, heading towards one destiny. E.B. Tylor called this social evolutionist position the 'Development Theory' (Ferguson, 2004).

Some authors criticises social evolution theory because it was based on the false belief in a 'common humanity' that did not take into consideration cultural differences and histories of the so called savages. Its behavioural effect was a Western colonial hegemony over the Other (Said, 1978; Kothari, 2005; Kapoor, 2008; Pieterse, 2010). By the end of the nineteenth century, the 'modernity' project had created a growing divide between the ethnocentric European 'modern' and the traditional ('Other') within colonised countries (Hewitt, 2009; Pieterse, 2009). For colonised elites, to be modern was to be Western.

Social evolutionary theory gave Western colonialists the paternalistic attitude of intervention to save the savage; and it also created a very competitive multipolar colonial world (Lange, 2009; Pieterse, 2010). France, Belgium, Germany and Britain convinced themselves that they were venturing into noble adventures overseas to civilise humanity (a moral obligation)—to be like themselves—and to right the wrongs of slavery (Ferguson N., 2003; Willis, 2011). Ferguson N. (2003) suggests that these far away expeditions were really fuelled by a fierce economic competition to maintain advantages within global politics.

The first half of the twentieth century saw the beginnings of a formalised global system. At the end of WWI, the multipolar colonial empire ended. Cooperation was the order of the day, which resulted in the establishment of the League of Nations in 1919 to determine what would be done in the colonies of the empires that had lost the war, particularly in colonies that were under German sovereignty (Ferguson, N. 2003). Although the League of Nations proved to be a weak international body (it failed to maintain international order) it established the concept of 'stages of development' whereby less developed nations—the nations that 'ceased to be under the sovereignty of states'—were placed in the hands of 'advanced nations' (Rist 2002, pp. 60-61).

These arrangements followed the colonial pattern of the justification for intervention; intervention for the sake of civilisation (Hewitt, 2009). With the events that led to the establishment of the League of Nations, formalised international cooperation had begun. Development theory was ready for another paradigm shift.

After WWII, global power shifted to the United States, and the Western modernity project took on a different meaning. The United Nations (UN) replaced the League of Nations as the new international body (the League of Nations failed to prevent WWII). Scholars pinpoint the new era of international development with the Truman Doctrine of 1949 (Cooper & Packard, 2004). In 1949, U.S. President Truman delivered a 'Four Point' speech which introduced the term 'underdevelopment'. It was suggested that development was not naturally occurring but something that was moving towards a final state (Escobar, 1995; Rist, 2002; Pieterse, 2010). Development could now be technically transferred from one party to another, with underdevelopment and development discussed as signposts in a single continuum (rather than being conceptualised as the polarised Coloniser/Colonised dichotomy). Scholars suggest that this new international order was introduced with a somewhat romanticised, evangelical, and religious tone (Escobar, 1995; Saul, 2005; Pieterse, 2010). Many argued that neo-colonialism had arrived: modernisation became the new Orientalism (Pieterse, 2010).

2.3.5 Modernisation: Development as Economic Growth

The 1950s laid the foundations of the Truman Doctrine. It saw a steadier push towards decolonisation and global institutionalisation of development (Cooper & Packard, 2004). Ideological clashes between the major powers were established in the 'Third World', between socialism/communism and democracy/capitalism (Fukuyama, 1992).

The 1960s was a decade in which Modernisation Theory dominated (Rist, 2002; Leys, 2004; Peet, 2009). Modernisation Theory owed much to the work of W.W. Rostow with *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (published in 1960), which some argue was philosophy of history divorced from history itself (McKay, 2004; Peet, 2009). In this work, Rostow (1960) established five stages of economic growth a nation must pass through before transition from a traditional society to a modern one: 1) traditional society; 2) preconditions for take-off; 3) take-off; 4) the drive to maturity; and 5) age of high mass consumption. Economic growth, based on investment in capital and infrastructure, it was thought, would eventually trickle-down to create equitable societies (Rostow, 1960; Kuznets, 1966; Szirmai, 2005). Pieterse (2010, p. 23) believes it was more about rational political ideals of enlightenment, written to reconcile liberty with order, to do with transcendence and mission. Modernisation under the U.S. paradigm embraced social evolution again but as 'social change'; the idea that individuals and needed to move from the traditional to the modern.

In reaction to Modernisation Theory a worldwide counter theory called Dependency Theory arose (Peet, 2009). It rejected the idea that Third World nations could follow the same development path as industrialised nations, and claimed that it was Western colonialism and economic imperialism that caused underdevelopment in the first place (Ferraro, 2008; Handelman, 2009). Dependency Theory had three strands. The first, proposed by Raul Prebisch (liberal reformer), suggested that economic growth benefitted rich nations at the expense of the poor and therefore Southern economies needed to adopt import substitution measures (Escobar, 1995). Andre Gunder Frank (Marxist) believed in another strand: that Western nations were deliberately exploiting poorer nations—using a centre and periphery paradigm that created modern and traditional worlds within the South—and advocated revolutions to rid the South of such influences (see also Escobar, 1995; Kapoor, 2008). The third major strand of Dependency Theory was the World Systems Theory by Immanuel Wallerstein. Wallerstein (2011) believed that the impoverishment of poorer nations was due to the structural evolution of the world economy into a system that was intrinsically lopsided. Dependency Theory's influence in the South set the stage for the next decade of development.

Hopes for a more equitable global system looked promising at the start of the 1970s but it faded by mid-decade (Peet, 1999). With the defeat of the US in the Vietnam War and the 1973 World Oil Crisis the West had become vulnerable, which gave the South more political clout (Vadney, 1992; Rist, 2002; Wallerstein, 2009). Events of the early 1970s prompted the UN to launch the *Declaration of the Establishment of a New Economic Order* in May 1974, which was an effort to bridge the widening gap between North and South (Preston, 1996; Peet, 1999). Rist (2002) suggests it was the Truman Doctrine rehashed: again delivering a messianic message of new beginnings and a bright future of cooperation. The New International Economic Order emphasised economic growth, and advocated an increase in world trade and aid to the South from the North (Preston, 1996; Peet, 1999). It also recognised the heavy debt burden of the South. In the end the NIEO was not implemented.

Another significant piece of development literature was *What Now* (1975) by the Hammarskjold Foundation (and United Nations Environment Programme). It critically evaluated the international institutional framework aimed at eliminating poverty. The report deduced several findings (Rist, 2002):

1) Development was not merely an economic process, nor was there one grand formula, but development was best achieved from within nations (endogenously);

2) Basic needs were best targeted at poorer communities within nations, and that these communities must initiate self-development;

3) North-South exploitation was due to the Southern elite acting as Northern accomplices;

4) Ecological factors must be considered in technological transfers, and the North must change approaches in trade relations;

5) The UN should decentralise and adapt to post-WWII global political changes.

What Now addressed what the NIEO did not: it focused on self-reliance and considered ecological issues as well (Thirlwall, 2011). Moreover, it looked at development as a global issue and not just something that needed to happen in the South (Rist, 2002). The industrial nations, it suggested, needed to develop too. The publication was considered heretical in that it suggested the supremacy of economics had ended.

The Basic Needs approach was another development concept of the 1970s. This concept emerged in a 1972 speech by Robert McNamara, the then President of the World Bank. McNamara's advice was that economic growth was not trickling down to the poorest sections of Southern nations (Peet, 2009; Willis, 2011). The Basic Needs approach was meant to increase the productivity of the poorest and draw them into national economies (Rist, 2002; Peet, 2009). It had the backing of the World Bank, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the Third World Forum (Peet, 1999). In 1976 the ILO deemed that 'basic needs' included minimum requirements (food, clothing, shelter, and certain items of furniture and equipment) as well as essential services (safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport, health and education and cultural facilities) (Rist, 2002; Willis, 2011). The Basic Needs approach, although good in principle, failed due to political battles between Northern actors (and because there was an enormous increase in international debt in the 1970s) (Cameron, 2005).

In 1977, the UN commissioned Willy Brandt to report on the failures of international development: the failure to bridge disparities between rich and poor nations. Brandt's 1980 publication of *North-South: A Programme for Survival* revealed huge disparities between the North (achieving growth based on the successful trade of manufacturing goods) and South (experiencing failures due to the lack of trade and export income) (Thirlwall, 2011). The report suggested that bridging the gap between North and South must come through the expansion of world trade. The report recommended an increase in development aid from the North, but with a more humanitarian emphasis on basic needs and respect for cultural identity.

The concept of sustainable development and the environment gathered momentum in the 1980s. In 1982, the UN General Assembly initiated The World Commission on Environment and Development (chaired by the then Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland), which was published as *Our Common Future* in 1987 (Preston, 1996). The Brundtland Commission confirmed that development and the environment were inseparable:

> The environment does not exist as a sphere separate from human actions, ambitions, and needs, and attempts to defend it in isolation from human concerns have given the very word 'environment' a connotation of naivety in some political circles. The word 'development' has also been narrowed by some into a very limited focus, along the lines of 'what poor nations should do to become richer', and thus again is automatically dismissed by many in the international arena as being a concern of specialists, of those involved in questions of 'development assistance'. But the environment is where we live: and 'development' is what we do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode. The two are inseparable (World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), 1987, p. 8).

Rist (2002) suggests that the value of the Brundtland Commission was that it entrenched the term 'sustainable development' into international development circles; and that it opened a debate on what 'sustainable' actually meant, and how it would be achieved.

The 1980s could be described as the rebirth of classical economics through structural adjustment programmes (Peet, 2009). Structural adjustment policy was intended to bring stability to the international system. Its rationale was that because the South had encountered worsening terms of trade in the 1970s (due to rising interest rates, over purchasing from abroad, worsening of world prices for primary products, corruption, and low levels of foreign investment, to name a few), the North, through the InternationalMonetary Fund (IMF), should 'adjust' the monetary disorder to correct trade balance problems (Rapley, 1996; Stiglitz, 2002). For the South this meant economic liberalisation (restructuring) under a Western-style institutional framework (Chandler, 2011). It opened doors to competition from large foreign corporations, which saw the collapse of local businesses unable to compete (Stiglitz, 2006). This Western-led development project placed self-determination limitations on poorer nations (Saul, 2005; Collier, 2007). The 1980s were the lost years.

2.3.6 Post-Development, Neoliberalism and Sustainable Development

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and subsequent breakup of the Soviet Union, a new age dawned. The proliferation of development theories surfaced. Fukuyama (1992) called it the 'end of history', meaning that the world was at the ultimate political system of liberal democracy: modernity had reached its final state. An age of peace and security had arrived. Others spoke of Risk Society and an age of uncertainty (with the end of socialism and the dominance of neoliberal market forces) (Beck, 2000). It resulted in the rise of multinational corporations, a weakening of the role of nation-states, and an unstable new global order (Korten, 1995; Kingsbury, 2004; Saul, 2005). This increased the likelihood of civil wars breaking out in many ex-colonial territories, and separatist ethnic 'nations' began asserting their right to self-determination (Evans, 1993). The 1990s were characterised by the rise of the corporation and the increase of failed states and terrorism (Paris, 2004; Collier, 2007).

Priorities of supranational organisations shifted in the 1990s. With a humanitarian intervention emphasis, the UN started committing peace-keeping forces to global conflicts, attempting to fulfil a humanitarian role previously occupied by experienced Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)

(Paris, 2004). But UN actions at the conflict end were perhaps based more on a Washington Consensus strategy than on humanitarian relief (Rapley, 1996; Robertson, 2006). The final goal of intervention seemed to be to institutionalise and liberalise post-conflict states for trade purposes (Paris, 2004; Chandler, 2011). Robertson (2006) argues that there was also a more concerted worldwide effort to prosecute war crimes in the International Criminal Court after four decades of nations offering lip service to human rights conventions. Chandler (2011) argues that Western state-building interventions failed in post-conflict situations because they were too liberal. Others believe they had actually reinforced the weakening of post-war states (Paris & Sisk, 2008). The historical dualism within international development endeavours continued throughout the 1990s: the development aim of globalisation (neoliberalism) from the top, and the eradication of poverty and environmental sustainability from below (Thirlwall, 2011).

The UN initiated new ways of measuring development from the start of the 1990s, with the launch of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) annual *Human Development Report*. In the first edition it introduced the Human Development Index (HDI), which went beyond Gross National Product (GNP) as the main indicator of development to a multi-dimensional formula which included: life expectancy at birth; adult literacy rates; and combined gross enrolments for primary, secondary and tertiary education (Sen, 1999; Willis, 2011). The UN's annual reports were to outline priorities for global development, and present a wider variety of data by which nations could be properly evaluated (Willis, 2011). Its emphasis on human development highlighted that economic growth needed to be measured in terms of what it did for humanity and the environment, not as an end in itself (Sachs 2005; 2008). In the HDI, poverty had been redefined as a lack of choice and capabilities—a lack of freedom—rather than only about a lack of income (Sen, 1999; Thirlwall, 2011).

The World Bank took a different approach in the new era. It shifted away from failed structural programmes to poverty alleviation. The World Bank's strategy for achieving poverty alleviation for its member states was to advocate Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), an approach by which client governments would prepare complex development plans in conjunction with civil society for funding (Sumner & Tribe, 2008). The PRSP sourcebook covered areas such as participation, governance, community-driven development, gender, and environment. Client states needed good governance based on sound human rights records if they were to attract funds. Some suggest that the assumption behind the World Bank's new requirements was that poverty needed eradicating as though it was a scandal itself (Stiglitz, 2006; Kapoor, 2008; Klien, 2008).

The World Bank's (and the IMF's) good governance approach attracted many critics. This was because 'good governance' surfaced from the ashes of 1980s failed structural adjustment programmes. (It has been suggested that 'good governance' had its roots in colonial policy (Hewitt, 2009)). Many authors argue that rather than accepting responsibility for irresponsible

lending practices, the IMF and World Bank blamed past failures on client state corruption (Stiglitz, 2006; Kapoor, 2008; Hewitt, 2009). It was not surprising that the World Bank eagerly supported the establishment of Transparency International (an international NGO that emerged in the early 1990s), which introduced the 'Corruption Perceptions Index' —an index that ranked countries on perceived corruption levels (Rist, 2002). It also emphasised the importance of civil society development to keep states accountable to citizens. Yet Kapoor (2008) suggests that the World Bank's actions contradicted its policy to fight against corruption by only funding NGOs that were not too 'politically active'. The World Bank has also been criticised for transferring the Western institution-building model under the euphemism of 'technical assistance' even though it is not within the Bank's Articles of Agreement to interfere politically in members' affairs (Kapoor, 2008). Little had really changed in the new era: the term 'good' in 'good governance' was defined by the Western model of state-building rather than through the self-determination of struggling client states.

The World Bank justified and explained the emphasis on good governance principles with its 'ground breaking' research *Assessing Aid* (1998). This document revealed no correlation between aid and economic growth—which had previously been axiomatic in aid policy—and therefore aid needed linkage with good governance (including good human rights records).

In the 1990s, participatory approaches to development, or alternative development, became popular (Chambers, 2008). In other words, a growing interest in civil society-led development emerged. This arguably began with grassroots approaches pioneered by Brazilian educator and social activist Paulo Freire with *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972). Freire believed that literacy education would enable individuals and communities to break free from 'cultures of silence', to transform worlds by resisting the 'housing of oppression'. His work with illiterate peasants in Brazil's poorest regions engendered much international interest from educators and development workers. From Freire's work and ideas followed the buzzword 'empowerment'; by which he meant to educate for political consciousness and praxis (social action and reflection) (Chambers, 1983).

Robert Chambers became a key advocate of participatory approaches in the 1990s with the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method(s) (which came out of the Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) method(s)). Cooke and Kothari (2001) noted that PRAs were about 'empowerment'. They were not one single method, but a collection of methods: a 'cookbook' approach for local contexts. PRA methods were tailor-made for particular settings, and were designed to restrict outside practitioners from imposing scientific, impersonal, 'expert' advice from above (Chambers, 2008; Narayanasamy, 2008). Its philosophy was that insider, local knowledge is superior to outside, top-down knowledge, and therefore it is better that outsiders act as facilitators

(even participant and learner) in development projects (to 'hand over the stick' to the local community) (Chambers, 1983). PRA methods ensured local community knowledge generation and ownership (Narayanasamy, 2008).

One criticism of participatory approaches is that they are not entirely free of bureaucratic linkages; from funding biases (Cleaver, 2004). Goffman (1997) criticises participatory approaches for 'bureaucratising the spirit', whereby local knowledge is generated by main stage actors (according to the institutional programme); while those on the back stage are ignored or coerced into assigned roles (see also Francis, 2001; Cooper & Packard, 2004; Kapoor, 2008). Due to this problem, employing skilled practitioners for development projects has recently been emphasised. It is suggested that highly skilled practitioners have ability to inform large bureaucracies of real clients (Cooper & Packard, 2004; Ferguson J., 2004; Leys, 2004; Carr, 2010).

Over the past few decades, the term 'hybridisation' has crept into the development lexicon. Bhabha (1994), in particular, introduced hybridisation as a way of creating level playing fields in local contexts in response to Orientalism and institutionalised development (see also Pieterse, 2010). Kapoor (2008) adds to Bhabha's work by advocating hybridisation strategies. Homi Bhabha sparked a lot of interest in agency by recognising the homogeneous 'fixity' that Edward Said's Orientalism placed on the 'imperialistic' North (Kapoor, 2008). Lange (2009) found within British colonialism there was a variety of developmental state legacies. Pieterse (2010) suggests that for hybridisation strategies to work, a range of actors and a multitude of ideas in the global order need consideration: states, international financial institutions (IFIs), the UN and its agencies, and civil society; and within these, infrastructure, locations, development thinking and disciplines. Hybridisation theory acknowledges that the world is constantly shifting. For local communities it means the reinterpretation of outsider dominant discourse on their own terms, in their own way, according to local conditions. Hybridisation strategy has made it possible for local communities to break hegemonic ideological strongholds, and create more balanced, collaborative playing fields, if they so desire (Pieterse, 2010).

That brings us to the twenty-first century. With the new millennium, optimism for new beginnings in international development was high. In September 2000, one hundred and forty-seven heads of government met in New York determined to resolve the major issues of the twentieth century (Sachs, 2005). At this meeting the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, released a publication, *We the peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century*, indicating that the UN represented its 191 members and all peoples of the world. From this came the *Millennium Development Goals (MDG)*, which looked at issues of war and peace, health and disease, wealth and poverty, and set out a fifteen year plan to meet eight major targets (with dozens of subcategories) in each of these areas (Sachs, 2005; Easterly, 2006). MDGs were similar to the 1970s basic needs approach, but its motive was for widespread human rights improvements. Others saw it as the continuation of

neoliberalism (Peet, 2009).

The MDGs have recently been criticised for having Western-created universal, fixed goals that are not useful for global realities (Sachs, 2005; Easterly, 2006; Collier, 2007; Saith, 2007). Sachs (2005), the Director of the UN Millennium Project from 2002-2006, asserted that the MDGs have shown developers that governance was not the major problem—giving examples of many countries that had efficiently bureaucratised without seeing benefits—and urged richer nations to provide more aid and better coordination of aid. Easterly (2006) suggests that MDGs are utopian, and that development requires not planners, but searchers (those at the grassroots level able to identify real needs and implement piecemeal initiatives to address those needs). Pronk (2004) called for flexible, country specific aid policy. Collier (2008) (suggesting that aid is ineffective and globalisation unhelpful) advocates a plan from the bottom up—supported by the Group of Eight (G8)—to address poverty traps (new preferential trade laws, laws against corruption, international charters, and even 'carefully calibrated military interventions').

2.3.7 Summary

This section presented a brief survey of Western development theory, and covered some significant shifts in development thought. It showed that Western development theory—its universal modernity project—moved from the laws of nature, to progress and social evolution, to modernisation and dependency, and onto structural adjustment and human development (capacity). Western projects of the past fifty years were rooted in colonialism, and the discourse of bridging gaps between rich and poor nations hardly change. Development became widely 'global' from the 1960s. With numerous shifts in the history of Western development thought since Aristotle, Western views may be summarised as: science, individual, liberty, progress, free market, universal, law and order, and mission.

The influence of Western development ideals on Chinese concepts cannot be underestimated as Western powers interacted with China's major urban centres, off and on, for the last two centuries. With the opening up of China in 1978, resulting in greater direct foreign investment across China, it is possible that Western theories reached many villagers. It will be interesting to find out whether this is true: to what degree, and in what ways, if at all, have Western practices and concepts of development reached the minds of average Han villagers?

2.4 Concepts on Chinese Development

2.4.1 Introduction

This section looks at ideas that have influenced, or may have influenced a Chinese village's development. It addresses ideas as themes rather than as an historical survey, as that was done in the first part of the review. That section did not cover China's religio-political tradition, so those

ideas—Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism—make up the bulk of this section. Included in the themes, where necessary, may be significant historical points in the development of that thought, to place it in perspective. Although there has been an effort to place the themes in chronological order, some ideas may have overlapped, grown, disappeared, and re-emerged depending on the social, political, and economic forces of a given time.

The earliest development thought came from Chinese religion. It is commonly held there are three Chinese religions: Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism (imported from India). Confucianism is the pragmatic, ethical, moral, social, philosophical system; Taoism is a more mystical, esoteric and reflective practice; and Buddhism, Lyall (1975) suggests, is the religion that met the Chinese need when the others did not satisfy. Berthrong (1994, p. 245) considers that Confucianism was the "dominant tradition of pre-modern China". Smith (1968) surveyed Chinese religion and discovered that the primitive religion of the Shang Dynasty (1766 BC) was the religion that eclectically underpinned usage of the three Chinese religions. It was perhaps from this indigenous belief system that the 'Mandate of Heaven' (cultic state with the emperor interceding for the people), ancestral worship (ancestral spirits brought success or failure), and a sacrificial system (appeasement of the spirits) arose and shaped the other three (Smith, 1968; Stover, 1974). Some believe the ancient Chinese used the terms *Shang Di* (the ancestral god of the Shang) and *Tien* (Heaven) for God; but during the Chou Dynasty the former was dropped in favour of *Tien*, the supreme *Di* and personal God who demanded righteous government (Smith, 1968; Wakeman Jr., 1975). Lyall (1975) viewed the three Chinese religions as one complex system, but the Chinese people as not deeply religious. Rather than a systematic religious system, Lyall (1975) suggests that the Chinese created an ethical system concerned with the regulation of society, one that paid little attention to gods and the after-life.

2.4.2 Confucianism

Confucianism is a Chinese religion or philosophy established by Confucius (551-479 B.C.), or *Kong Fuzi*, meaning the 'Master King'. Littlejohn (2010, p.xix) notes that it spread to Japan and Korea and that it consisted of a vast array of "moral, social, philosophical and religious ideas, values and practices".

Confucius acknowledged that he did not create; that he was merely a lover of ancient culture who transmitted the work of the *Ju* scholars (Berthrong, 1994). Mote (1971) suggests Confucius did more than that. He introduced three innovations: 1) created the role of the private teacher; 2) explained the significance of *Ju* scholars' writings (methods and ideas of education); and 3) established the principle of accepting students of all social backgrounds (meritocracy). A few centuries after Confucius' death, he became known as the greatest Chinese sage (Smith, 1968).

Confucius was deeply concerned about China's social and political situation, so his aim was to

influence ethically the feudal lords fighting over a weakened Eastern Zhou dynasty (772-221 B.C). Confucius was first and foremost an ethical teacher of virtues and rites, but also a political reformer for national unity (Mote, 1971). (Confucius tried to form a state to achieve this). In the end, Confucius returned home as a teacher after his expulsion from several states (Smith, 1968).

Confucius' central tenet was 'the way' (*Dao*), which meant the right way of living, with family obligations of utmost importance (Ivanhoe, 2002). Roetz (1993) suggested that 'the way' did not merely pertain to the immediate political and social climate, but offered a timeless, universal ethical standard.

Confucius' ideas are in the *Analects*: "If right principles prevailed through the empire, there would be no need for me to change its state" (*Analects* 18:6) "a unity all-pervading" (*Analects* 15:3) with "one single thread binding my way together" (*Analects* 4:15). As Confucius was rejected, it was his disciples, *Mencius* (372-289 B.C.) and *Xun Zi* (312-230 B.C.), or perhaps later Confucianists (*Hun Feizi*, 280-233 B.C. and *Li Si*, 280-208 B.C.), that formed his writings into an ethical and political system (Smith, 1968).

Confucianism spread and became deeply entrenched in Chinese culture. The seventh emperor of the Han dynasty, *Han Wudi* (141-86 B.C.) first adopted the Confucian system to govern China. From there, Confucianism waxed and waned, yet it stayed culturally embedded in Chinese psyche for several millennia (Wasserstrom, 2009). For example, Confucianism lost its favour with the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.), but during the Song Dynasty (960-1279 A.D.) neo-Confucianism emerged under *Zhu Xi* (1130-1200 A.D.): a metaphysical combination of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism (Wasserstrom, 2009). In 1919 it was banished by the May 4th Movement; and since China opened its economy in 1978, there have been calls for Confucian revival (Bianco, 1967; Fewsmith, 2008; Littlejohn, 2010).

There are several major Confucian themes:

1) Rites, Rituals, Morality (*Li* 礼) – This refers to social practices, and is understood as 'proper conduct' or 'propriety' (Ivanhoe, 2002). It is an abstract concept that deals with customs, etiquette, morals to sustain and maintain the cosmic order, and can be summarised as "the rules that govern inter-human relations as well as ceremonies and how to act in a given situation" (Schuhmacher & Woerner, 1994; Rainey, 2010). Through rites it is considered that individuals can transcend 'animality' (Littlejohn, 2010). Confucian texts contain 300 major and 3000 minor rules of ritual, including customs such as tea drinking, titles, mourning, and governance (Analects 10:22). Fei (1992) suggested that Chinese society could be understood as 'rule by rites'.

2) Humanness (*Ren*仁) – Relationships are connected with *Li* in that people must behave according to their place in society, that is, father, government official, son, etc.. 'Harmonious relationships' is a central theme, and the great goal in Confucianism (Rainey, 2010). Confucianism promotes mutuality in all relationships, and therefore the junior party in any social interaction must offer reverence to the senior party, and the senior party in return is expected to show benevolence and concern for the junior (Rainey, 2010). Littlejohn (2010) noted that righteousness (*yi*), wisdom (*zhi*) and trustworthiness (*xin*) makes *ren*. *Ren* is the way of being in the world; the way that compassion and goodness makes people into 'human beings'.

3) Filial piety (*Xiao* 孝) – *Xiao* originally referred to respect that a son must show to parents, whether alive or deceased. It was later extended to five relationships (*wulun*): i) minister to ruler; ii) son to father; iii) wife to husband; iv) younger brother to elder brother; and, v) friend to friend (equal relationship). Filial piety comes from the *Book of Filial Piety,* written by Confucius and his son in the 3rd century B.C (Mote, 1971). Under filial piety, the father had enormous power over the son but Confucius did not advocate unreasonable piety (Rainey, 2010). It places the importance on family for orderly society and extends to rulers to treat subjects like family (Littlejohn, 2010)

4) Loyalty (*Zhong* 忠) – *Zhong* is similar to filial piety but deals with *realpolitik*. In relation to class relations, Confucius understood that filial piety could be subverted by autocratic rulers, and he therefore introduced loyalty as an extension to filial piety (Ivanhoe, 2002). With loyalty, the ruled were obliged to obey rulers according to the 'Mandate of Heaven', the right to rule based on moral rectitude. Loyalty is a great virtue in Confucianism and is related with the obligation that one has to others in the order of family, spouse, ruler, and then friends (Rainey, 2010).

5) Self-cultivation (*Haoxue* 好学) – *Haoxue* refers to the commitment to improve oneself (Littlejohn, 2010). Willingness to learn from others is at the centre of this concept; that every person needs refining. "When walking with two people, I will always find a teacher among them. I focus on those who are good and seek to emulate them, and those who are bad remind me what needs to be changed in myself" (Analects 7: 22). Self-cultivation is not considered as mere textbook knowledge but with personal improvement.

6) Exemplary persons (*Junzi* 君子) – *Junzi* was particularly important in classical Confucianism. It involves working towards becoming the 'perfect man'; a saint, scholar, or gentleman (Rainey, 2010). The gentlemen belongs to society's elite, and

acts as a role model and guide for others (Littlejohn, 2010). The gentleman is expected to demonstrate loyalty and filial piety, have good morals, and serve humanity. He must possess 'culture' and 'polish' as well as 'ritual' (Fairbank, Reischauer, & Craig, 1973). The opposite of the gentleman is *xiaoren*, which means 'small person', characterised by pettiness, greed, selfishness, superficiality, and materialism.

7) Rectification of names (*Zhengming* 证明) – Confucius advocate *zhengming* based on the idea that social disorder is due to the improper use of names, that is, not calling things by their proper names (Fairbank, Reischauer, & Craig, 1973). It is best explained in primary documentation as follows:

> A superior man, in regard to what he does not know, shows a cautious reserve. If names be not correct, language is not in accordance with the truth of things. If language be not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success. When affairs cannot be carried on to success, proprieties and music do not flourish. When proprieties and music do not flourish, punishments will not be properly awarded. When punishments are not properly awarded, the people do not know how to move hand or foot. Therefore a superior man considers it necessary that the names he uses may be spoken appropriately, and also that what he speaks may be carried out appropriately. What the superior man requires is just that in his words there may be nothing incorrect.. (Analects 13:3).

Xun Zi in the "The Rectification of Names" (Analects, chap. 22) believed that the ancient sage-kings named things according to their actuality but overtime terminology became confused causing moral problems.

2.4.3 Daoism

Daoism was another religion or philosophy established in early imperial China. Its main scripture, titled *Tao Te Ching*—originally titled *Lao Tzu*—dates back to the sixth century B.C.[2] (Li, 2009). Some believe Lao Tzu was the author of *Tao Te Ching*—a sage who kept records in the Zhou Dynasty—but others suggest Lao Tzu was not a historical figure but the writings of 'Old Masters' (*Lao* means 'old', and *Tzu* means 'Master') (Mote, 1971). Other Daoist texts include *Chuang Tzu*, *Huai Nan Tzu* and *Lieh Tzu*. Like Confucianism, Daoism emphasises 'the way' (a transformation of the earlier personal God), but in Daoism the way is more mystical and metaphysical, and less rules and ritual (Li, 2009). It is used as a means to escape the world, to "transcend the limitations of human existence" through the contemplation of nature (Berthrong, 1994, pp. 251-252).

Daoism is not considered as mere 'passive contemplation' though, but an endeavour to find the secrets of heaven and earth, and in doing so, immortality and freedom (a oneness with the Dao): "The ways of men are conditioned by those of Heaven, the ways of Heaven by those of Dao, and the Dao came into being by itself" (Berthrong, 1994, p. 252). Daoist ethics emphasises the 'Three Jewels of the Dao' (compassion, moderation, and humility), with attention to spontaneity, nature,

[2] Modern scholars date the text in the late 4th or 3rd century B.C.

health, effortless action, and longevity. Some have debated whether Daoism has two distinct branches: classical philosophy and religion (Keping, 2007; Li, 2009). More a collection of revelations and teachings than a unified religion however, several disciplines are incorporated within Daoism including alchemy, traditional medicine, astrology, martial arts, cuisine, *qi gong* (breathing exercises), and *fengshui* (aesthetics) (Li, 2009).

There are several core Daoist beliefs:

1) *Dao* – the Dao is the flow of the universe, the power or energy behind the natural order (Cane, 2002). It is an impersonal force and not an object of worship, and is equated with nature because nature demonstrates the Dao. The Dao is also very mystical in that it cannot be named:

> The Tao that can be expressed is not the eternal Tao; The name that can be defined is not the unchanging name. Non-existence is called the antecedent of heaven and earth; Existence is the mother of all things. (Tao Te Ching 1:1-3)

   Behind the Dao is the idea of disconnected forces, such as the masculine (yang) and feminine (yin), working interdependently to bring balance or harmony to the natural order. This duality is common throughout Chinese philosophy and extends to other parts of nature such as dark/light, high/low, and expansion/contraction. Liu (2006, pp. 134-8) notes other ideas of the Dao:

   - "Non-being"
   - Empty yet inexhaustible function
   - "Constant or eternal"
   - "Exists prior to the whole universe, including Heaven and Earth"
   - "Generates the world"
   - "One and undifferentiated"
   - Not perceived by the senses
   - "Models itself after nature"
   - "the female principle" (soft, passive, infant)
   - "Ineffable"
   - "Nameless"

2) *De* – this refers to the virtue, power, and integrity that are conveyed through the active nurturing of the *Dao*. *De* is the actual practical living of the *Dao*.

3) *Wuwei* – translated as 'without action', and sometimes articulated as 'action without action' or 'effortless doing' (Li, 2009). By practicing *wuwei*, the Daoist aims to align self with the *Dao*, to obtain the soft and invisible power of the *Dao* (Keping, 2007). It is related with natural action, to know when to act or not to act, without excessive

effort. In other words, *wuwei* is to align the will with the natural universe, in harmony with the natural order (Li, 2009). To exert one's will against natural order is to disrupt the harmony.

4) *Pu* – translated as 'uncarved block', 'unhewn log', or 'simplicity'. It is the unadulterated state of mind, free from knowledge and experiences, existing in the "primordial way of the Dao" (Carr & Zhang 2004, p. 210).

5) Spirituality – Daoists believe that by understanding self, one understands the universe because the human body is a microcosm of the universe (Li, 2009). Daoists teach that the body connects with five elements—also referred to as the five stages, steps, or movements—of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water (Zhu, 2007). These elements interact in five phases in two 'Cycles of Balance', the generation and creation cycle (wood feeds fire, fire creates earth, earth bears metal, metal carries water, water nourishes wood), and the overcoming or destruction cycle (wood parts earth, earth absorbs water, water quenches fire, fire melts metal, metal chops wood) (Carr & Zhang, 2004).

2.4.4 Buddhism

According to Western scholars, Buddhism was possibly introduced into China in the late 2nd century B.C., with the visit of royal monk, Massim Sthavira, sent by Ashoka the Great as a Buddhist missionary (Welch, 1967). Chinese historical records indicate that the spread of Buddhism began during the 1st century A.D., when the Han emperor Ming (58-75) sent an envoy to Northwest India to enquire about Buddhism following the dream of a tall golden man (Latourette, 1964; Welch, 1967). Yet it was not until the middle of the 2nd century A.D. that Buddhism expanded throughout China with the first Chinese translation of the scriptures (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006). It is possible that the fall of the Han dynasty in 220 prompted a greater interest in Buddhism. Since then, Buddhism made a large impact on Chinese philosophy, literature, and politics; and became particularly influential in the life of the Chinese during the Tang Dynasty, which produced numerous Buddhist Masters (Latourette, 1964; Fairbank & Goldman, 2006). Buddhism only transformed Confucian and Taoist traditions, but became a major part of the cross-fertilisation of the three Chinese religions during the Ming Dynasty (1369-1644) (Berthrong, 1994). The major Buddhist concepts assimilated into Chinese culture were the art of meditation (which had a close relationship with Daoism) and filial piety (connecting it with Confucianism). Buddhism produced several schools throughout the ages (Welch, 1967):

1) *Huayan* (founded by Du Shun 557-640 CE) – teaches that the world is a fabrication of the mind. Liu J. (2006) describes it as a "subjective idealism", meaning that the real

world exists as we presently understand it, and therefore is in opposition to "materialism and physicalism" (p. 250). The *Huayan Sutra* rejects the world of the phenomenon and teaches that 'the world is a void', that is, there is no substance to the physical world; only in the mind (Liu J., 2006). Zhi-yan, a patriarch of the *Huayan* school, explains the main theme of the school as follows:

> Since there is no separate objective realm outside of mind, we say "only mind." If it operates harmoniously, it is called nirvana; therefore the [Sutra] says, "Mind makes the Buddhas." If it operates perversely, it is birth-and-death; therefore the [Sutra] says, 'The world is illusory – it is only made by one mind." (Cleary, 1998, p. 252)

2) *Tantai* (founded by Zhi-yi 538-597CE) – The Tantai School was an attempt at formulating a unique Chinese Buddhism rather than creating an extension of Indian Buddhism (Liu J., 2006). The doctrine is based on the *Lotus Sutra*. It is a syncretistic school (combining the extremes of other schools), based upon the three truths of its first patriarch, Nagarjuna:

   i. "Dharmas pose no independent reality and thus are empty"
   ii. "..a dharma has the temporally limited apparent existence of phenomena and can be perceived by the senses"
   iii. "The third truth is a synthesis of the first and second (Schuhmacher & Woerner, 1994, p. 372)

3) *Chan* (brought to China by Bodhidharma (470-520 CE) – this school's thought is the "direct mind-to-mind transmission of the 'lamp' of enlightenment from the Buddha" (Corless 2002, p. 97). It is not based on written sutra, and has an oral tradition (Liu J, 2006).The literal translation of Chan is 'meditation', and it has two main practices: *zuo-chan* (sitting meditation which focuses on alertness and awareness in the present) and *gong-an* (which involves a dialogue between teacher and disciple in order to answer a riddle to discover the mind of the Buddha) (Welch, 1967). Liu J. (2006, p. 306) notes that the essence of Chan Buddhism is "pure mind" or "retrieving one's original mind".

4) *Jingtu* (Pure Land Buddhism, also known as the Lotus school, founded in 402 by Hui-*yuan*) – the follower of this school aims to be reborn in the 'pure land of Buddha'. Its doctrine is based on the sutras (*Sukhavati-vyuha, Amitabha-sutra, and Amitayurdhyana-sutra*) that tell the legend of the Amitabha Buddha, and it is practiced by reciting his name (*Nan-mo-A-mi-tuo Fo'*, "Hail, Amit Buddha!") and 'visualising his paradise' (Corless 2002, p. 97; Liu J., 2006, pp. 280-1). Devotees believe in the power and active compassion of Amitabha Buddha, and that one will be reborn in the pure land if they entrust themselves to him (Corless, 2002).

2.4.5 Nationalism

Nationalism makes up part of the Chinese concept of development, but there are many aspects.

Generally, Chinese nationalism is about pride in its '5000 years of civilisation' and its humiliation and losses of sovereignty at the hands of the West and Japan (Gries, 2005) (which lasted from the Opium War of 1842 until the end of WWII). Bajoria (2003) understands modern Chinese nationalism as China lamenting the loss of its glorious past, and a tendency to blame the West for this loss (with the First Opium Wars and the possession of Hong Kong in 1842) (see also Wei & Liu, 2001). Despite pride in a rich civilisation, the literature suggests that the Chinese have had a propensity towards self-loathing and inferiority as well: the belief they are not as good as the West in terms of race (Barme, 1996). These quotes—written just before and after the Tiananmen massacre—support such claims:

> The religion of the Chinese today is cheating, deceit, blackmail and theft, eating, drinking, whoring, gambling and smoking..... We think any honest, humble gentleman a fool and regard any good person who works hard and demands little in return as an idiot. Crooks are our sages; thieves and swindlers our supermen..... there are no greater cynics than the Chinese people. (He X. , 1988)

> Generally speaking, foreigners are pretty naive.....They're materially extremely wealthy, but impoverished in the realm of spiritual culture. They've just cottoned on to dope smoking, and that's an artificial form of stimulation! We Chinese know how to get our kicks out of self-annihilation. (Wang Y. , 1992)

> This race that dwells on the continent of East Asia once shone with brilliance bestowed by the sun. Now it has its back to the icy wall of history, driven there by the forces of Fate. We must prove whether we are an inferior race or not, for now Fate is pissing in our very faces. (*Yuan*, 1990, p. 127)

Barme (1996) argued that this mood was the result of manipulation and abuses of the communist regime. Another perspective is that such anger within Chinese society is fuelled by the negative effects of Western imperialism in the early part of the twentieth century (Wei & Liu, 2001; Pei, 2006). Pei (2006) dates this back to the May 4, 1919 movement whereby Chinese students rose up in opposition to China's unjust treatment under the Treaty of Versailles, which gave Chinese territory to Japan[3]. It is suggested that the May 4th student movement was the soil of the Chinese revolutionary tradition (Fewsmith, 2008). (Liu Kang, a Professor of Chinese Studies at Duke University, believes that the contemporary Chinese Communist Party government is the result of nationalism rather than any particular ideology such as Marxism and Communism and this is what the Party holds firmly onto for legitimacy (Bajoria, 2008)).

Some literature indicates that Chinese nationalism is forward looking and focussed on neo-statism and state-building: a search for a new identity and to rectify damage done by the revolutionary project[4] (Fewsmith, 2008). This aspect of Chinese nationalism is a more pro-Western stance, or a less aggressive Western stance, with a focus on democratic political reform (managing the tension between traditional Chinese cultural values and modernisation). Since 1978, and particularly in recent years, the push for political reform at the top has been a tug-of-war struggle: between those wanting to maintain One-Party rule and those that want a 'civil society' with political

[3] Many of the 1919, May 4 student leaders later formed the Chinese Communist Party in 1921.

[4] Although the New Left advocates that the free market approach was a mistake and calls for a return to Mao's policies.

representation (Dickson, 2010). From below, advocates for a stronger civil society believe the Communist Party is weak and divided, and with the increasing use of the internet at home and abroad have become more outspoken and willing to protest against government policy (Shirk, 2008).

Finally, Chinese nationalism may be influenced by China's obligations under international conventions. As a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December 1948), human rights may be a possible concept of development in Chinese society, but perhaps not as outsiders wish. The following statement made by Liu Huaqiu (China's representative at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna) in 1993, typifies the China's official understanding of human rights:

> The concept of human rights is a product of historical development. It is closely associated with specific social, political, and economic conditions and the specific history, culture, and values of a particular country. Different historical development stages have different human rights requirements. Countries at different development stages or with different historical traditions and cultural backgrounds also have different understanding and practice of human rights. Thus, one should not and cannot think of the human rights standard and model of certain countries as the only proper ones and demand all countries comply with them (Liu H., 1995).

Whilst China does not discount the concept of human rights in development, it is clear that, rightly or wrongly, it has interpreted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on its own terms.

Literature on Chinese nationalism contains a mix of positive and negative feelings. During the reform era, anti-foreign sentiments appeared from time to time; as did the 'revering of the West' mood. With China's economic modernisation, Chinese nationalism seems increasingly concerned with state-building and a better rules-based system; a Chinese system that seeks integration with the world without Westernisation.

2.4.6 Soviet Communism

Another influence on Chinese concepts of development is Soviet Communism. The Chinese communist state originated from the Soviet Union's Leninist party-state (established in 1917), and Lenin's thought was central to China's revolutionary cause up until the late 1950s, when Mao deemed that the Soviet model no longer applied to China (Hobsbawm, 1994).

Lenin's ideology was as follows: That a vanguard party is organised according to democratic centrism, whereby the internal group makes democratic decisions concerning ideology and strategy, then carries them out externally in a unified manner (Ulam, 1965). Once a dictatorship is established, it eradicates false consciousness in society, such as religion and nationalism; because the bourgeois used these to make the proletariat docile, and economically exploit them. The dictatorship governs by a decentralised system of Soviets, which is the local councils within society (Ulam, 1965).

Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) believed that with a full-time, vanguard party of professional

revolutionaries, the proletariat could establish revolutionary consciousness to overthrow the capitalist system, and institute a proletarian dictatorship (Ulam, 1965). Lenin formulated his ideology to defeat capitalism globally, and he exhorted workers worldwide to unite against imperialism, which he believed to be the highest form of capitalism (Ulam, 1965; Vadney, 1992). After launching a takeover of the Tsarist regime in October 1917, known as the Bolshevik Revolution, Lenin became the first Chairman of the Soviet Union, and two years later started the Communist International, the Comintern.

The Soviets saw China as an ideal place to launch international struggle. After suffering at the hands of imperialism for many decades, Lenin's Marxism gained acceptance in China. In 1921, the CCP was established and aligned itself with the Soviets (Spence, 1999). Jiang Jieshi, although not an advocate of class struggle, also accepted the Soviets because he understood the political usefulness of collaboration for the nationalist cause (Fairbank, 1983; Goodman, 1994). Fairbank (1983) describes how the CCP organised itself into a Bolshevik organisation:

> The Chinese Communists had begun by dividing Chinese into classes of workers (proletariat), peasants, petty bourgeois, national bourgeois (capitalists), and other, reactionary, classes (militarists, feudal landlords, and others). Their first manifesto of June 1922 (a year after the formal foundation) called for a united front against the militarists in which the CCP would represent the workers (assuming with Marx that a party can really be an organ of only one class) and also poor peasants, while the 'democratic party' (the KMT) would represent bourgeois elements. (p.280)

Although Lenin's successor Joseph Stalin pulled back from the Soviet Union's worldwide revolutionary campaign with 'Socialism in One Country' in the 1920s (Vadney, 1992), the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism had entered the Chinese political landscape.

The Chinese-Soviet arrangement laid the foundation for the CCP revolution, and was central in forming China's Leninist party-state. Lenin (and Stalin) arguably had a significant impact on the Chinese concept of state development. Esherick (2003) asserts that despite Mao's creativity in the Sinofication of Marxism, it is possible that the Soviets had a greater influence on the CCP and China's revolution than portrayed in literature.

2.4.7 Maoism

Mao and his revolutionary ideas were briefly discussed earlier in the chapter. To this, Mao's idea of contradictions may be added. Schurmann (1973, p. 77) notes that what distinguished Mao's ideas from the Soviet model were 'contradictions'. Mao saw contradictions in the following relationships:

1) Industry and agriculture and between heavy and light industries
2) Coastal and inland industries
3) Economic and defence construction
4) The state and the productive units and individual producers
5) The centre and the regions

6) Han and other nationalities
7) The Party and others
8) Revolution and counter-revolution
9) Right and wrong
10) China and other countries

2.4.8 Dengism

Deng Xiaoping and his reform ideals were also discussed earlier in the chapter. To understand the Deng era, one summary may be made: although Deng was an economic liberal, he would not allow reforms to undermine the rule of the One-Party communist state (Goodman, 1994).

In the early 1990s, Deng was known for saying, "It doesn't matter whether a cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice", which meant that economic reform was very important whether it was achieved by capitalism or socialism (Goodman 1994, p. 3). Deng's quote came after a southern tour during which he successfully revived China's economic reforms, which were under threat following the Tiananmen Square massacre and the collapse of Eastern Europe and Soviet Union communism (Goodman, 1994). Politically, however, Deng tried to unify establishment intellectuals throughout his term—which included the popular unrest of the Democracy Wall movement in 1978 and Tiananmen in 1989—was with the 'Four Cardinal Principles' that exhorted the Party to uphold (Goodman, 1994):

1) Mao and Leninist-Marxist thought
2) The People's dictatorship political system
3) The communist spirit
4) The Party leadership

2.4.9 The Three Represents

Jiang Zemin came to prominence after Deng promoted him to Party General Secretary in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen massacre, because Jiang was a hardliner from Shanghai (Fewsmith, 2008). Jiang was a centrist in the political spectrum: he sought a middle path, and became a Deng supporter in late 1989 against the leftists (Saich, 2004). With Deng's political career and health waning after the Tiananmen massacre, Jiang effectively became leader during the 1990s.

During Jiang's honeymoon period he supported Deng's reforms, but not to Deng's liking (Fewsmith, 2008). After Deng directly criticised the central leadership's slow-paced economic reform on the 1992 southern tour, Jiang became a serious economic reformer (Spence, 1999; Fewsmith, 2010). In 1993, Jiang coined the term 'Socialist Market Economy' to shift China's economy from a centrally-planned socialist arrangement to a government-regulated capitalist market (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006).

Economic reform under Jiang's leadership was challenged in the mid-1990s by the New Left, which had a critical ideology based on egalitarian Western theories (post-colonialism, post-structuralism, post-modernism). They were against capitalism and imperialism, and called for a return to economic policies of the Cultural Revolution days (Goldman, 2005). The New Left was concerned for workers and peasants, that the fruits of economic growth were not evenly distributed, and were being eaten by corruption.

In the late 1990s, Jiang had his next challenge. With the return of Hong Kong and Macau, and China's immanent WTO entry, Jiang faced resurgent liberalism from establishment intellectuals (Saich, 2004). The economy's rapid growth during the 1990s plus the sell-off of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) made corruption an increasingly urgent issue (Fewsmith, 2008). State corruption, along with a growing political consciousness among China's population, evoked an alarming number of protests (Goldman, 2005).

Jiang's leadership (1993-2002) was characterised by elite politics—the bringing of capitalists and entrepreneurs into the Party—for which he received much criticism. It was not until 2002 that Jiang's theory of Three Represents was enshrined in the Party constitution. The Three Represents was outlined in the following speech:

> Reviewing the course of struggle and the basic experience over the past 80 years and looking ahead to the arduous tasks and bright future in the new century, our Party should continue to stand in the forefront of the times and lead the people in marching toward victory. In a word, the Party must always represent the requirements of the development of China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of the development of China's advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people in China. (Jiang Zemin's speech at the 16th CPC Congress, November 2002)

In the Three Represents, Jiang advocated economic production, cultural advancement, and political consensus, but many in the Party found it incomprehensible, and privately held concerns over the 'advancement of productive forces' part, as it did not deal with the widening gap between rich and poor (Dickson, 2010).

2.4.10 Scientific Development Concept

Hu Jintao took over the Presidency in 2003, but Jiang stacked the Party prior to his departure, and remained the effective leader behind the scenes for two more years. Fewsmith (2010) notes that Hu has been a competent politician, walking a careful line under Jiang's watch while exerting his Scientific Development Concept (SDC) plan—which includes development concepts such as 'sustainable development', 'social welfare', and 'Harmonious Society'. Hu Jintao's approach to development has been people-centred. In recent years, Hu increased his rhetoric on political reform with substantial democracy (Cheng, 2008).

Scientific Development Concept is considered an extension of the line of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong thought, Deng Xiaoping theory, and the Three Represents, which shows a concept of development with a strong historical base (Jenner; 1992; Fewsmith, 2010). Hu's SDC is another

variation of 'socialism with Chinese characteristics', and was included in the Party's constitution at the 17th Party Congress in late 2007.

Faced with increasing social problems as the new president, Hu's plan was to divert from an emphasis on economic growth to social harmony, meaning democracy, the rule of law, justice, sincerity, amity, and vitality (Fewsmith, 2008). SDCs 'people-centred' approach took people's rights as a primary concern (Hu A., 2011). Its 'harmony' emphasis involved environmental harmony: between state and civil society, and humanity and nature.

Hu's concept of harmonious society comes from the classical Chinese term *Xiaokang* ('well off'), which advocates that prosperity needs balancing with social equality and environmental concern (Xu, 2009). Deng revived this term in connection with Chinese Marxism as the ultimate goal of China's modernisation project (Xu, 2009). *Xiaokang* is similar to the Chinese classical concept of *Datong*, meaning 'great unity' (where everything is at peace).

2.4.11 Supranational Organisations

China's integration into the world trading system has influenced its views on development. Major supranational organisations working with China have been the United Nations, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Concerning China's UN involvement, it adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a short-term global project aimed at addressing eight key areas of development by 2015 (MFA & UN, 2008). China's involvement with the World Bank has been of a short-term nature, including poverty reduction strategies of the 11th Five Year Plan (2006-2010) (World Bank, 2008). China's 2001 WTO entry introduced challenges to the way it strategizes development (its policy reform and poverty reduction strategies). As a WTO member, China's had to conform to international rules in areas such as intellectual property, telecommunications, financial market, and agriculture (Jacques, 2009).

2.4.12 Non-Government Organisations

Non-government Organisations (NGOs), both domestic and international, appeared in China in recent decades. However the central government constrained the functions of these organisations. The government has been very suspicious of NGOs (and civil society in general) but allowed them because it believes they are necessary in China's opening up, and because it is able to control their activities. Lu (2008) notes that many Chinese NGOs are severely restricted in their ability to network and open branches in more than one province, and they are not allowed to operate where a similar NGO already exists. Chinese NGOs are basically an extension of the government, and fulfil many government social service functions (Lu, 2008). Political activism by Chinese NGOs is not tolerated.

International NGOs have the role of promoting democracy and good governance, but they are also restricted. Lang (2008) suggests that if international NGOs are to gain access to China, and to remain operational, they must cooperate with the Chinese government in a supportive capacity instead of working from an ideological basis. International NGOs do not work with their counterparts as they would in other countries.

Major international NGOs working in China are the International Republican Institute, the Carter Centre, and the Ford Foundation. These organisations play a technical and procedural role in the development of village elections, and their effectiveness lies mainly in keeping an open dialogue with the Chinese government (Lang, 2008). What they each agree to is that the Chinese government must be the actor making the transition to democracy.

2.4.13 Summary

The Chinese development themes section has several threads. Each modern Chinese leader has followed core socialist values (and possibly Confucian values), while adding unique ideas to Chinese political tradition. Figure 3 below suggests there are three important variables that may constitute development at the *meso* level. They are listed in order of importance, with each part dovetailing into the next: 1) Traditional Chinese values; 2) Marxism-Leninism; and 3) the idea that China chooses to assimilate its development strategy (such as international laws and agreements, and NGO advice). China's modern-day development wonder began with strong Confucian (also Daoist and Buddhist) roots, and later a May 4th Movement that led to a dominant Marxist ideology that shaped the revolution and its centrally-planned socialist state. The modern-day Chinese system is underpinned by its socialist past and traditions, but also by its integration into the global system. What makes its tree grow is the soil: but it may be that the core of Chinese development and civilisation is 'The Way'.

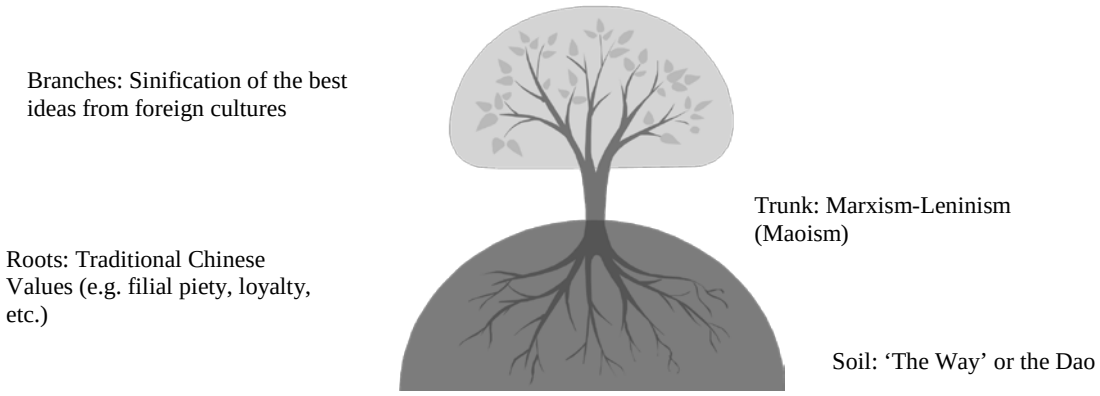


Figure 3 Nature of development in the Peoples' Republic of China

The shadow this tree casts across China's present-day villages may have various possible shades. It will be interesting to test these themes in a Chinese village in order to understand the degree to which they have shaped the lives of villagers.

2.5 Chinese Village Life

2.5.1 Introduction

This section focuses on contemporary Chinese village life: first by providing statistical detail on development; and second, from specific studies on particular villages. Headings have been categorised into six dimensions. Under each heading, issues included are those that may currently have wide impacts, but it is not suggested that the issue is understood uniformly or holds the same levels of importance for each village or villager.

2.5.2 Political

This category begins with village committee elections because this was Deng Xiaoping's attempt at grassroots democracy in the late 1980s. Village elections began informally in 1979 in Guangxi province when some villagers sought to establish local order and autonomy. Village elections were then implemented on a nationwide scale in several stages: 1) the adoption of elections in rural areas (1978-1987); 2) trial elections (1988-1998); 3) New Organic Law of Village Committees (1998-present) (He B., 2007). He B. (2007, p.1) suggests that moves toward grassroots democracy were a response to growing rural unrest after the breakup of the commune system, which saw "peasant rebellions, daily resistance, rampant corruption, social disorder, kinship fighting, 'dark force' in village politics, and extreme poverty through rapid economic development..."

Political reform in China's villages over recent decades had significant national implications. He B. (2007, p. 3) suggests that it may have altered the mindset of three million CCP village officials and transformed approximately 650,000 villages. Many anticipate that if this grassroots democracy were to be successful, democracy would filter upwards to urban areas and fundamentally change Chinese politics at the central level (He B. 2007; Nathan, 2008). Brown

(2011) notes that direct elections have already started to occur at the township level.

The political structure of village governance is tripartite. Each village has a branch of the CCP, a village committee (administrative function), and a representative assembly (which has legislative and executive functions) (Landry, 2008; Gang, 2010). In the 1987 Organic Law of the Village Committee (and the 1998 amendments), village committees are elected by 'free and fair' means, and are responsible for the village's daily affairs (Gang, 2010). Non-party village representatives are permitted to serve as committee members, and the elected village head is not required to be a Party member. The Party Secretary is generally accepted as the real village head (Keping, 2008; Gong, 2008). In other words, the Party Secretary, as a part of the political system holds the ultimate responsibility, even though not the elected head (Gong, 2008). Village committees are today an autonomous grassroots body; however they are not necessarily linked with the administrative system.

Village committees function within two spheres: the natural (common) and administrative (political system) (Feuchtwang, 1998). Louie (2001, p.140) describes the committee's overlapping functions as follows: "The village committee is at best a mixture of grassroots self-governance and governmental administration....and a semi-official layer at the bottom of the administrative structure of the state. It is regarded as a successor of the now defunct production brigade".

Figure 4 shows the five levels of government above villages:

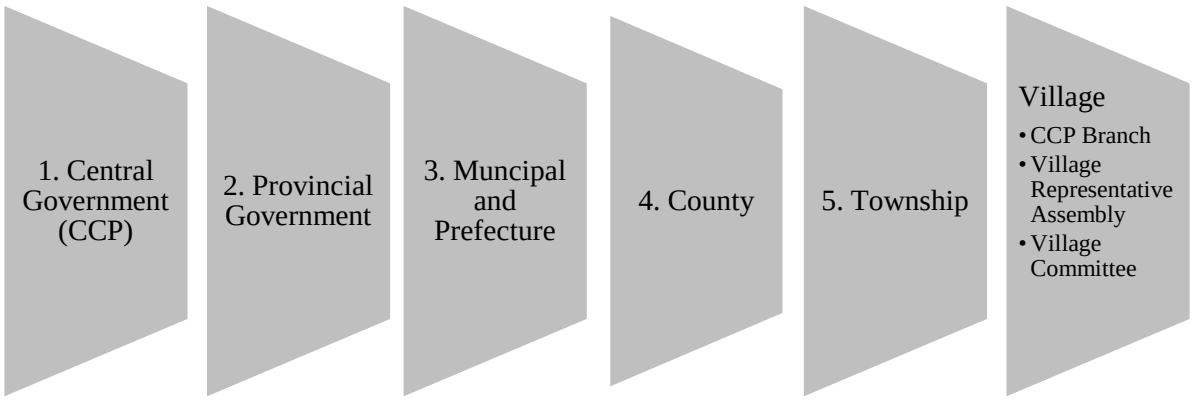


Figure 4 Chinese administrative levels

The 1998 (November 4) New Organic Law of Villagers' Committees sets out the following guidelines and responsibilities for village committees (National Peoples Congress, n.d.):

1) Self-governance under the banner of socialist countryside;
2) Self-education;

3) Mediation of disputes and public order;
4) Assisting the government in its work;
5) Support villagers in setting up various cooperatives and respect their decision-making power;
6) Ensure lawful property rights;
7) Publicise policies of the state and disseminate scientific and technical knowledge;
8) Enhancing unity and mutual respect amongst villagers (including ethnic groups);
9) Participation and inclusion of women in village committee;
10) Village candidates for election open to all over 18;
11) Elections by secret ballot and open vote counting;
12) People to be reported for bribing, forging ballots or interfering in the villagers election rights;
13) 20 per cent of the electorate may call for an impeachment of elected committee member;
14) Villagers' assembly to be convened at the request of 10 per cent of the electorate;
15) Committee to refer matters to the village assembly;
16) Village assembly may revise village charter and submit to the township government for approval;
17) Village committee to observe Constitution and state policies impartially;
18) Village committee decision making on the basis that minority is subordinate to the majority;
19) Village committee may establish subcommittees for mediation, health, public security, etc.;
20) Committee to assist subcommittee with ideological education concerning supervision of villagers' legal matters;
21) Members of organisations 'owned by the people', who are located in the countryside, are not permitted to join the villages' organisations;
22) The law must be implemented at all levels in the provinces and autonomous regions;
23) The law is to take effect immediately and the provisional law is to be annulled.

Much has been written on China's village elections and grassroots democracy. Most have been critical. Peerenboom (2002) considered village elections from an instrumentalist perspective and asserted that elections were a way for the centre to control the countryside. Rowen (2003) questioned the legitimacy of village elections due to discrimination against non-party members, and Chan (1998) doubted their freeness and fairness. Niou (2002) has reservations about the scope and procedural fairness. Others believe that the Party uses village elections to coerce and co-opt villagers into subjugation (Su, 2000; Hu, 2002). Diamond and Myers (2000) casted doubt on the use of the term 'electoral democracy' for China's village elections, suggesting they have been 'illiberal'. Dearlove (1995) is convinced that village elections are a 'traditional leftist' means

of strengthening the Party at the local level rather than an attempt at genuine grassroots democracy. Brown (2011) suggests that the Party has used village elections to recruit entrepreneurs; those who might not normally join for ideological reasons.

Several scholars have supported China's village democracy efforts. Thurston (1998) has affirmed the quality of democracy in village elections; Lawrence (2000), in the operation of village institutions; and Jennings (1997), in the general culture of local level democracy.

One study suggests that the implementation of village elections across rural China has not been uniform. Zhang (2008) studied several villages in Jiangsu (Wuxi) and Zhejiang (Wenzhou) provinces and found two extreme examples of village election and grassroots democracy realities.

In Wuxi, the villages had a history of strong local government, from strong Commune and Brigade Enterprises (CBE) in the Mao era (dating back to the Great Leap Forward (GLF)). When China commenced reforms in 1978 these villages had an advanced agriculture, a rich commercial history, and a great geographical location. They had what Zhang (2008) calls the government-led development model.

In contrast, the Wenzhou villages came from a background of political and geographical isolation and poverty. Because they were isolated from a major city, and were located near Taiwan—and considered a fighting zone in the 1950s—the government had not contributed significant resources to the area. But these villages had an entrepreneurial spirit, a utilitarian culture, and a good commercial history. As well as a weakened Chinese government during the 1950s, Wenzhou villages also encountered violent struggles during the Cultural Revolution, so they had a long history of weak local governance before the reform era. Yet Wenzhou became an economically thriving, entrepreneurial city, and even came under central government investigation several times because it was feared that it was not following the socialist road. In many ways it has led China in micro, market institutional reform with its laissez-faire flare, and in the creation of new types of businesses[5].

From these two histories came contrasting applications of the New Organic Law of Villagers' Committees. Zhang (2008) observed the 2001 and 2004 elections in Wuxi and Wenzhou and subsequently labelled the Wuxi elections as controlled, and the Wenzhou elections as competitive. Controlled elections were characterised by voter apathy (high voter turnout, but without meaning), led by upper government levels, puppet 'designed' candidates (and stacked ballots usually consisting of Party members), and illegal procedures (e.g., vote buying, multi votes by organisers).

[5] *Guahu* was a means by which individuals attached themselves to a private household to form a partnership. The combination of entrepreneurs and households in a private business forced the government to label such private business as shareholder cooperatives (which is another type of collective ownership), in keeping with the socialist mantra.

Interestingly, the power distance between village party secretaries and village heads was wide in Wuxi. On the other hand, village elections in Wenzhou were vibrant participation, competitive, meaningful, autonomous, law abiding (although these elections attracted sideline criminal behaviour), and ballots consisting of non-party candidates with substantial village issues. Entrepreneurs ran for office in the Wenzhou elections with self-funded campaigns, and this was perceived as an opportunity to influence commerce. In Wenzhou and Wuxi two patterns of grassroots political development based on diverse local histories emerged. Zhang (2008) notes the main factors that differentiated village elections were:

1) The attitude of upper levels of government
2) Unique social conditions and class structures
3) Differing economic features
4) Clan and lineage conflict within village leadership (produced competitiveness in Wenzhou)

In light of Zhang's research, it is important to recognise the role that folk culture may play in village political life, from the common village, as opposed to local government interpretations of democracy. Chinese folk theory of village democracy presents a substantive model of democracy. He (2007) proposed that within Chinese village folk culture, politics tends to be worked out in terms of political equality, in a republican-like tradition of democracy. Folk democratic culture within Chinese villages focuses on a community spirit that curbs the excessive living of the greedy rich and lazy poor. Chinese folk democracy ideals place the village above the individual or clan, and it therefore limits personal economic interests. It is the natural way of solving problems in accordance with the traditional principle of harmony. .

Without substantive democracy, corruption is one factor likely to hinder village development. Local government corruption has been a centuries old institution in China, but during China's reform era it reached alarming heights. For most of the reform era, corruption involving taxation issues became a major problem for peasants, but this was resolved in the early twenty-first century when a policy to abolish agricultural taxation came into law. Yet Cai (2007) suggests that local government corruption has now turned to land theft (see also Ho, 2010).

Villagers respond to corruption by rightful resistance, by aligning themselves with lawful authority to overcome the gap between what is promised by the centre and what is delivered at the local (Chen & Wu, 2006; O'Brien & Li, 2006). Activists' strategies have been to keep local authorities imprisoned by the centre's promises. Where local cadres do not deliver, villagers have been known to take disputes through the governmental chain of command to Beijing.

2.5.3 Economic

The most important initiative for villages during Deng's reforms was perhaps the Household Responsibility System (HRS) of the early 1980s. Under the HRS, Deng decollectivized centrally-planned communes, allocating farmland to each village household so that it could grow produce. The HRS enabled villagers to grow crops for household consumption and for market sale.

Town and Village Enterprises (TVEs) also emerged as a result of Deng's reforms in the mid-1980s. TVEs were similar to CBEs (commune and brigade enterprise) but smaller and not state-owned (Guthrie, 2008). TVEs were the reason behind rural China's rapid growth, and they grew so quickly that rural areas became reclassified as urban. Another consequence of the rise of TVEs was that many peasant farmers abandoned work on the land to become employees in TVE factories. TVEs were permitted to form joint-ventures with foreign companies, which opened Chinese villages to global markets in ways that were not previously possible.

TVEs had numerous positive impacts on China's rural economy. Liang (2006, p. 236) described TVEs as the new economic force, growing at 20 per cent annually from 1978 to 2003. In 2003, 21.85 million TVEs employed 135.73 million workers (Liang, 2006, p. 236). TVE growth has raised income levels in rural China by absorbing surplus labour in the agricultural sector (Guthrie, 2008), and they have supported investment in agribusiness (30.8 billion in 2003) and developed infrastructure (Liang, 2006). Liang (2006) suggests that because TVEs integrated urban-rural areas with better infrastructure, a more equitable outcome between coastal and interior regions would eventuate. The central government believes that by encouraging coastal TVEs to forge partnerships with Western region TVEs—of which 50,000 already exist—this may reduce regional disparities (Liang, 2006).

One case study highlights some reasons behind a TVE's success. Cook and Qi (2005) studied the transformation of Jinshan Cement Plant in Jinshan Township, Jiangsu Province into the Suzhou Golden Cat Cement Company Ltd starting in 1974. It was a highly successful TVE that set the benchmark for other TVEs to follow. Cook and Qi (2005) suggest the following factors for its success:

1) It increased capitalisation and the scale of its enterprise
2) It increased networking at a variety of scales from local to global
3) It improved managerial and technological expertise
4) It has had an increased concern for quality of output
5) It has had an improved environmental consciousness and action

The reform era has also seen the transformation of State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) in towns and villages over recent years. This started in the 1980s when the central government reduced the

number of SOEs: they had become inefficient and wasteful of resources (Guthrie, 2008; Fewsmith, 2010). Keping (2008) suggests that SOEs recently underwent significant changes in function due to government moves towards the separation of the Party from the State. Corporate governance, similar to the UN and World Bank 'good governance' emphasis, has become the focus of many SOEs (Leng, 2009; Xu, 2009). In the past, SOEs attracted special political and economic attention; but today a SOE may operate as a modern enterprise and a separate entity in the market place (Keping, 2008).

There have been many other rural organisations existing alongside TVEs and SOEs (Clegg, 2006):

1) Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (SMCs) (est. early 1980s) – supporting farmers in growing markets;

2) Rural Credit Cooperatives (RCCs) – financing TVEs;

3) Specialised Production Technical Associations (SPTAs) (also known as Farmers' Technical Associations) (FTAs) (est. late 1980s) – providing technical and marketing (rather than economic) advice to farmers beyond the capacity of SMCs. They are loosely associated with village cooperatives and mainly work outside the village;

4) Shareholding Cooperative System (SHCs) (est. early 1990s) – assisting management and owners of companies forming joint stock arrangements;

5) Rural Cooperative Fund Associations (RCFAs) (est. early 1990s) – fund-raising within rural communities;

6) Farmers' Specialist Cooperatives (FSCs) (est. late 1990s) – monitoring of pricing disparities between nationwide regions and assisting farmers with transport logistics (for example, sharing the cost of packaging, handling and storage). It also provides marketing and technical support for farmers to enter specialised and higher markets.

Despite the availability of various credit institutions, Zhao (2010) suggests that the majority of Chinese farmers do not have access to credit to modernise businesses. The central bank estimated that only 25 per cent of rural households have formal access to funds (Zhao, 2010).

The microfinance industry in China is small. Microfinance programmes mainly operate in the very poor and isolated areas of Western and Central China, and have only attracted US$50 million over the past decade (CGAP, 2009). Rural credit cooperatives (RCCs) (established in the 1950s) have a far wider reach, with 32,000 branches across China's townships, but they have a large number of non-performing loans and approximately 46 per cent of RCCs are making losses

(CGAP, 2009). Bartu (2006) noted that RCCs are also "not able or willing to serve the poor, remote communities." Microfinance has been another possible means for farmers to access credit but the microfinance industry in rural China has been widely developed.

Another economic development issue in rural China is the relocation of households without proper compensation. When the central government addressed the peasant taxation burden in 2006 by abolishing agricultural and land tax, it significantly reduced the revenues of local governments (Wong, 2007; Dillon, 2008; Gong, 2008; Ho, 2010). As a result local governments shifted their attention to land requisition and property development, which has seen peasants forced off their land without fair compensation. Protests in rural China today are to do with fighting for house and land, or proper compensation (Dillon, 2008).

The central government made some significant investments in rural China's infrastructure during the reforms. From 1998 to 2003, it spent 300 billion *yuan* on rural infrastructure, which was 30 per cent of its budget (Rural Development Institute of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), 2006, p. 50). Much was spent on irrigation and water conservation projects, roads, telecommunications and electricity. In 2001, rural China had 85,136 water reservoirs (with a holding capacity of 528.1 billion cubic metres), up from 83,219 reservoirs holding 430.1 billion cubic metres in 1985 (CASS 2006, p. 52).

Efforts were also made to increase the number of water-saving irrigated lots, with irrigated land lots increasing from 5281 in 1985 to 5686 in 2001 (CASS 2006, p 52). In addition, the central government kept 81.54 million hectares of land from 'water and soil erosion' (CASS 2006, p. 53).

Since the 1950s, the Chinese government made transport infrastructure a high priority. Spending increased in the late 1970s when financial assistance was given to villagers who worked on road constructions (CASS 2006, p. 56). From 1996 to 2000, the government spent 140 billion *yuan* on roads alone (CASS 2006, p. 56). As at 2002, China had 1,337,000 kilometres connecting 99.5 per cent of townships and 92.3 villages in rural China (CASS 2006, p. 56).

Great strides were made with telecommunication infrastructure. CASS (2006, p. 57) provides the following statistics for rural China: In 1978 there were 0.43 telephones per 100 people, but by 2001 this increased to 25.9; there were also 11.4 mobile phone users per 100 people by 2001. This amounted to a total of 68.43 million telephones in rural China (CASS 2006, p. 57).

Central government spending also saw rural power station numbers increase dramatically from nine in 1952, to 80,319 in 1980; but decline to 27,633 in 2002 due to China's ability to build smaller stations with greater capacity (CASS, 2006, p. 58). As a result, power consumption in rural China increased from 32.08 billion kilowatts per hour in 1980 to 2999.34 billion kilowatts per hour in 2002 (CASS, 2006, p.58). With power consumption increasing during the reforms, rural Chinese have been able to extend social and recreation hours and purchase products such as

plasma televisions, refrigerators and washing machines.

Figure 5 summarises the possible dynamics influencing village economic development (with some of the "Semi-Micro Environment" issues being discussed in this section):

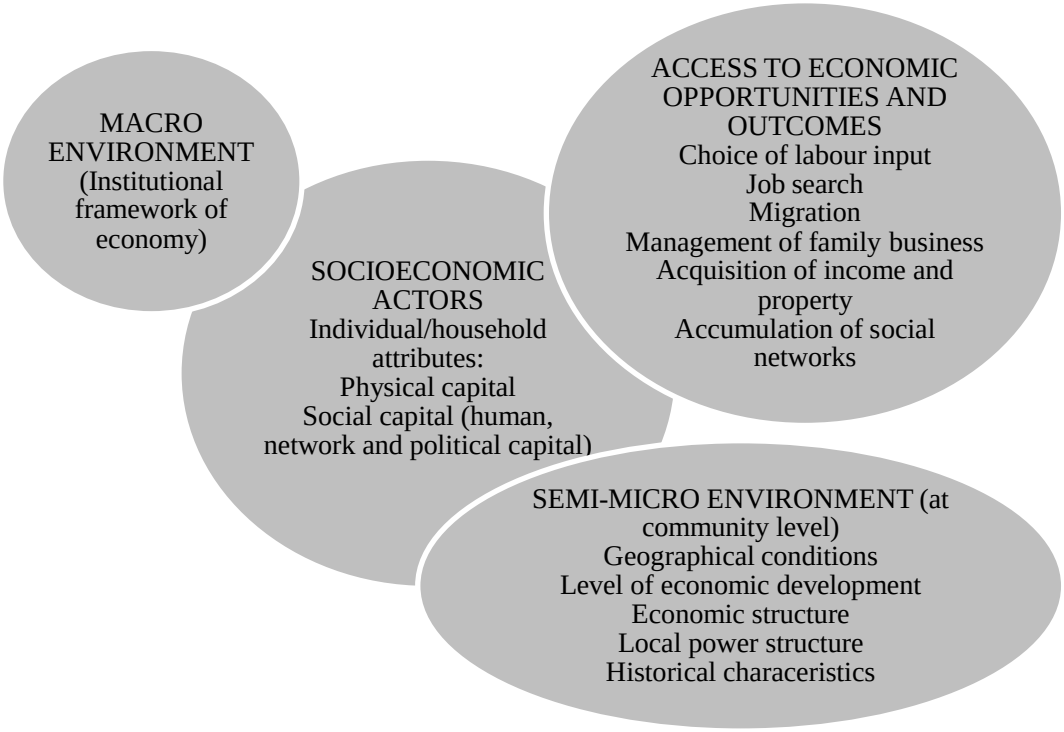


Figure 5 Dynamics of the modern Chinese village (Sato, 2003, p. 2)

2.5.4 Social

A social development issue that has had significant social implications for villagers for centuries is the *Hukou* System. *Hukou zhidu* (household registration) is the system by which the centre registers individuals and families according to occupation and residence (Dillon, 2008). It dates back to the Warring States period (Wang F., 2010). Categories under the system are rural, urban, agricultural, and non-agricultural. Although its purpose is to limit population movement[6], Cheng and Selden (1994) argue that the real aim is to keep rural China out of the cities. Potter (1983) suggests that it has created a dual economy: a socio-economic bifurcation between urban and rural; a 'caste-like' system. Under the *Hukou* system, villagers were traditionally restricted to a particular geographical location and therefore socially immobilised (Messkoub & Davin, 2000; Oakes & Schein, 2005; Wang, 2010). Mao's *Hukou* System is still in place today, but today there are fewer mobility restrictions (Hessler, 2010). Larger cities such as Beijing and Shanghai remain strict on urban migration, but the medium sized cities tend to accommodate migration from rural China.

[6] It incorporated elements of the labour registration system of the Soviets which served to control labour movement.

For younger villagers, migrating to urban areas appears to be a risk worth taking, but not without problems. If rural workers are successful in transition to urban employment, they may be able to afford to purchase a house in a city and obtain urban residential status, thereby receiving social security benefits such as healthcare and education for children (Wang, 2010). The negative implications for urban migration is workplace discrimination (e.g., longer working hours), but the benefits outweigh the risks, and the alternative of bleaker prospects in the village (Chang, 2008).

One positive aspect of urban migration for villagers is its potential economic benefits for the household (Mallee, 1998). Zhang (2008) suggests that because the migrant worker lives between two worlds—the urban and village—they can build a type of exogenous networking for the village household (and the village in general).

Although *Hukou* reforms provided greater employment opportunities for rural Chinese, villagers are still disadvantaged by a lack of education. Since the 1986 introduction of a compulsory nine-year education system, China significantly reduced illiteracy rates for citizens over 15. Zhao (2007) notes that from 1994 to 2004, the illiteracy rate for citizens over 15 went from 21.1 per cent to 10.3 per cent (p. 156). Nevertheless, Zhao (2007, p. 156) revealed that in 2004, the disparity between urban and rural illiteracy was a ratio of approximately 3:1 (13.7 to 4.8 per cent). In rural areas there was an even greater disparity between males and females in 2004, with the female illiteracy rate being 157 per cent higher (Zhao, 2007, p. 156).

Opportunities for rural Chinese to acquire higher education have been limited. Although Deng's science and technology reforms enabled young Chinese to gain university places based on professionalism and quality rather than politics and family background (Dillon, 2008, p. 73), it did not benefit rural China. Hong (2004) listed several issues restricting rural high school graduates from higher education: 1) increases in higher education fees; 2) rural poverty; 3) disparity between urban and rural incomes; 4) the burden of higher education costs. In 2009, the central government acknowledged the lack of educational opportunities facing rural residents when Premier Wen Jiabao said: "We need to give our attention to this problem. With social and economic development, rural people are getting wealthier, and their children should be getting more access to higher education. Obviously this is not the case at the moment" (University World News, 2009).

Villagers have experienced disadvantage in the health sector. This has been brought about by budgetary pressures on local governments, with spending falling from a national total of 6 per cent of GDP in the 1990s to 4.75 per cent in 2004 (Tian 2007, p. 54). Tian (2007) suggests this downward trend forced many medical services to privatise, and increased healthcare costs beyond the reach of many poor rural residents (Tian, 2007). Between 1998 and 2003 the cost of healthcare in rural China increased by 11.8 per cent (Tian 2007, p. 55). Dillon (2008) reports it is

not uncommon to hear stories of health providers refusing to treat patients—sometimes in a critical condition—without upfront payments. Poor rural residents often face the choice of either health or poverty, but they only receive 20 per cent of local government health budgets compared to 80 per cent in urban areas (Tian, 2007, p. 56).

Rural-urban disparities have been evident in other health statistics:

> In 1999, infant mortality rate was 37 per 1000 live births in rural areas, as compared with 11 per 1000 in urban areas. In 2002, the mortality rate among children under five years of age was 39 per 1000 in rural areas and 14 per 1000 in urban locales. Urban and rural maternal rates in 2002 were 72 and 45, respectively, per 1000. Perhaps most shocking, in some rural poor areas infant mortality rate has increased recently, although it has continued to fall in urban centres, and there has been a resurgence of some infectious diseases, such as schistosomiasis, which has [sic] nearly controlled in the past (Blumenthal & Hsiao, 2005, p. 1168).

The central government has to some extent addressed the peasant farmer's healthcare predicament. Dillon (2008, p. 78) indicates that in 2003 the government introduced a health care scheme whereby farmers pay a premium of 10 *yuan* per treatment and the government matches this cost and pays 50 per cent of medical bills. Dillon (2008) suggests that while this may encourage more rural residents to seek medical assistance, it does not cover the entire rural population; not all medical costs are covered, and it also depends on the goodwill of medical centres to keep fees low and eliminate corruption.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted in its mid-term MDG Report 2008 that "infant and child mortality was almost 2.7 times higher in western than in eastern regions, 2.4 times higher in rural than urban areas, and 2 to 5 times higher in the poorest rural counties than in large cities" (MFA & UN, 2008, p. 40). Most rural deaths beyond infancy—approximately 75 per cent—are caused by preventable conditions such as injury, diarrhoea and pneumonia. The report claims that micronutrient deficiency, although slowly declining, was the major factor in child mortality in rural areas.

Population growth is a social issue with implications for villagers. Statistics indicate that China's birth rate since the introduction of the One Child Family Plan in 1979 has significantly declined. In 1970-75, the fertility rate (the number of births a woman will have in her lifetime) was 4.9 births per woman, compared to the figure of 1.9 births per woman from 2000-2005 (UNDP, 2007). Moreover, the population growth was 1.2 per cent from 1975-2000, and is predicted to be as low as 0.6 from 2005 -2015[7] (UNDP, 2007). Leathers and Foster (2004) indicate that a fertility rate below 2.1 births per woman is the benchmark for reducing population.

China's population pyramid is growing weightier in the middle, which suggests that the shrinking younger generation will have the pressure of supporting a growing, ageing Chinese population in the near future (Welt Hunger Hilfe, International Food Policy Research Institute, and Concern,

[7] Figures include Taiwan.

2007). It also means that rural China (which is rapidly urbanising) will be required to support the wealthier cities with increased yields (keeping in mind that it is the younger Chinese who are migrating to the cities).

It is suggested the trend towards a growing Chinese population in the middle-aged bracket places pressure on the ecological system, which has only 1/15th of the world's arable land (FAO, 1998). The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO, 1998) notes China has been increasing its agricultural output to support the growing middle-aged population—and has become a net exporter of grain, non-grain and livestock in the reform era—but that it faces food supply and price fluctuations from year to year. Subsequently, poorer rural China has experienced lower levels of access to food than the richer urban Chinese.

Nevertheless, some recent statistics indicate that China's food security situation is improving. China's Global Hunger Index (GHI) decreased from 12.77 in 1990 to 8.37 in 2007[8] (zero is no malnutrition, no under-five children underweight, no children dying before the age of five; 100 is everyone with malnutrition, all children under-five underweight and all children dying before the age of five) (Welt Hunger Hilfe, International Food Policy Research Institute, and Concern, 2007). It is expected that China's GHI will be 5.88 in 2015.

This section included social development issues across rural China. It is acknowledged that the literature was weighted towards statistically-based studies rather than qualitative information, but the statistics offered broad insights into possible issues villagers might discuss in relation to development in any Han Chinese village.

2.5.5 Cultural

Cultural development may be either a formal or informal institution within the Chinese village. Formal cultural institutions may be viewed as the cultural initiatives of local governments (such as local tourism); the latter as customs and patterns of everyday life in a village.

This section looks at cultural development from a local government perspective as well as informal institutions across Chinese villages such as eating, marriage, *guanxi*, and kinship. From a high culture perspective, some issues previously raised in the literature review may relate to cultural development, particularly the religio-philosophical tradition from imperial China. Considering culture as the way people think, feel, and act in daily life; the other five dimensions of the 'Chinese village life' section also relate to 'cultural development'. In some ways this section implicitly looks at the clash between modernisation from above and the traditions from the soil. Figure 6 shows the dynamic that may be evident in a Chinese village.

[8] Compare with other 2007 data: India (25.03), Indonesia (4.73), Ethiopia (33.67), and Thailand (12.03)

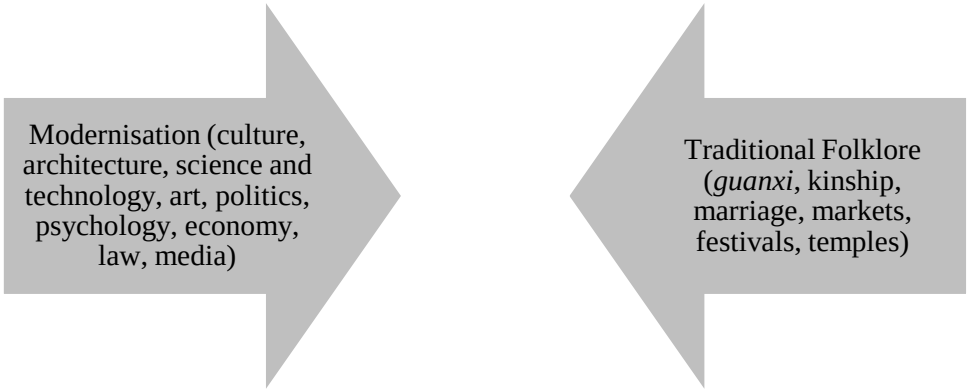


Figure 6 The clash of modernisation and tradition

Since the 1990s the central government promoted the role of culture in development and this altered the economic and political dimensions of village life. Oakes (2006) suggests that the Party promoted cultural development from the desire to create a stronger nationalism (after the disaster of the Tiananmen Square incident). At a local government level it had the potential to improve budgets.

But the Party's cultural policy direction changed at the turn of the century. Zhao and Tan (2007) note that at the 16th Party Congress in 2002, the government drew a clear distinction between public cultural institutions (e.g. state-controlled institutions such as public education, libraries, museums, national artefacts preservation) and commercial cultural enterprises (e.g. private education, sports and entertainment, exhibitions, tourism, audio-visual and the arts). Oakes (2006) indicates that the government's cultural policy shift was to clarify the limits for local governments' commercial interests.

The Party's continuing emphasis on local cultural development—and culture as an economic strategy—was again highlighted in its 11th Five Year Plan, launched in September 2006, which was the first time it developed a national cultural plan since 1949 (Zhao & Tan, 2007). It is suggested that these plans were connected with the aims of organisations such as the WTO and UNESCO (Oakes, 2006). These supranational organisations consider China's plans as important for 'good governance' and for 'sustainable economic development'. While the central government supplies the public infrastructure, local communities cultivate local knowledge to drive economic plans (Oakes 2006). This cultural strategy encourages local governments to change from managerialism to entrepreneurial communities.

The new cultural policy benefits the central government because it enables local governments to generate income, and it places limits on the privatisation of cultural resources. Wang (2001, p. 71) notes the importance of this strategy: "The state's rediscovery of culture as a site where new ruling technologies can be deployed and converted simultaneously into economic capital

constitutes one of its most innovative strategies of statecraft since the founding of the People's Republic". One concern raised about the strategy is that it may disturb village politics through "governance by culture" (Hall 1997, p. 235).

Whilst local cultural strategies represent economic value, they may result in ownership struggles between government, entrepreneurs and among villagers (Oakes, 2006). Villagers may have no option than to regulate themselves according to the goals, motivations and aspirations of organisations taking ownership over culture. Oakes (2006) suggests that the commercialisation of local culture may therefore produce artificial cultures to the detriment of genuine human creativity and abilities.

One study highlights the very different ways that the government's cultural strategy was implemented in three Guizhou villages: Azure Dragon (a *Tunpu* cultural theme park run by a joint-stockholding company); Ox Market Fort (privatisation of culture organised by the village head); and, Jin Family Fort (a village association promoting the festival of 'Carrying Wang Gong'). Oakes (2006) found the good governance and sustainable economic development only occurred in the latter case. In the Ox Fort Market case, the village head was accused of corruption: government grants had not filtered down to villagers. Azure Dragon, promoted as a model for *Tunpu* culture, was criticised for being too government-controlled, having limited input from villagers. This study revealed that in the modern Chinese village, cultural strategy outcomes for villagers may range from very good to very bad. It also indicates that the cultural dimension of development may be less about substantial cultural development and more to do with economic development.

The remainder of this section looks at some informal cultural institutions. Again, it is not suggested that these customs are expressed uniformly across all villages. The following topics have been included as possible widespread topics only. Kinship, *guanxi*, festivals, marriage, food and eating culture, and language and media are themes within the literature on Chinese village culture.

Literature on kinship shows conceptual shifts since the Mao era. Liu X. (2000) suggests that the concept of kinship is different today because there is less emphasis on written genealogy (mainly in the south) and more on corporate ownership and shared assets; particularly land. This view of kinship is supported by Ebrey and Watson (1986), who assert that the reform era view of kinship emphasises control and allocation of resources with hierarchical wealth segmentation.

Some indicate that the socio-economic concept of kinship is a southern view, and quite different to the northern concept. Jun (1996), studied the history of temples in Dachuan village in northwest China and discovered that before the destruction of temples during Mao's Cultural Revolution the family temple was connected closely with the ancestral lineage. Ebrey and

Watson (1986) note that northern kinship was based more upon corporate celebration and annual ritual cycles involving cemeteries, graves, ancestral scrolls and tablets, and that it is more about associational solidarity. Liu X. (2000) conducted an anthropological study in a village in Zhaojiahe in Northwestern China, and discovered that the term *zijiawu* was the appropriate term for kinship ('*zi*' is translated a 'my'; '*jia*' is translated as 'family'; and '*wu*' is translated as 'room' or 'house'). In the north, kinship is associated with belonging to the family home. These studies indicate that the concept of kinship is different in different Chinese villages.

Guanxi is another concept that may have changed within the Chinese village. Willis (2008) has discovered that there are two ways authors have studied *guanxi*: 1) as being deeply rooted in Chinese history and tradition, and about the opaque and mystical ways of relating in everyday life (Creel, 1953; Hucker, 1953); and 2) with a business orientation, about getting business done through personal contacts, networks, and connections (Waters, 1997; Itoh, 1998). Even these categories are too simple. Fan (2002a, 2002b) notes scholars have found *guanxi* to be a very complex concept to define.

It is suggested that *guanxi* refers to the depth of feeling within a relationship that obliges one to maintain that relationship from a moral standing (Yang, 1994; Fan; 2002a, 2002b). When two Chinese meet they may seek *guanxi* based upon commonalities such as school, hometown, friends, age, or workplace (Hu B., 2007). Yang (1994) indicates that *guanxi* has a connection with the Chinese concept of 'face'; the importance of being perceived as a person of social status and prestige in the community. Some scholars also understand *guanxi* as a term not used to describe family relationships or relationships that fall within normal social interaction such as husband/wife, teacher/student or boss/worker (Yan, 1994; Hu B. 2007). Where a *guanxi* relationship exists, both parties know the needs and wants of each other and consider those needs and wants when a request is made (Yan, 1994). Fan (2002a) suggests that *guanxi* can exist with very little direct interaction, and that it only exists where there is a need for something to be done (not merely because of a relationship). In this sense it can be a form of social capital, having the ability to make things happen when needed.

It is argued that *guanxi* has taken on greater importance during the reform era, and particularly in connection with TVE development (Hu B., 2007). In the early days of TVEs entrepreneurs needed *guanxi* to secure resources for business as TVEs were not connected to SOEs. Hu B. (2007) called this '*guanxi* community'. It was an extended form of *guanxi* beyond the village to assist village businesses.

The centuries-old tradition of *guanxi* may be under threat by China's WTO ascension and its requirement for greater legal regulation. Schramm and Taube (2003) predict that while the displacement of *guanxi* may not appear likely in the short-term—even with the strengthening of

the legal system—in the long run it may depend on the attitude of the Chinese people toward legal culture. Traditionally, the Chinese have held an ambivalent attitude towards legal culture, but if greater importance is placed on the law, or legal culture, over time, then *guanxi* tradition may diminish (Schramm & Taube, 2003). Conversely, a strong *guanxi* tradition may make it very difficult for China to implement the rule of law. It is argued that *guanxi* benefits have been overestimated, and that it has provided fertile soil for corruption and crime. Fan (2002b) suggests that in business the following formula regarding *guanxi* is evident:

$$\text{money} \leftarrow guanxi \rightarrow \text{power} \longrightarrow \text{corruption}$$

Guanxi appears to underpin the way the Chinese people make things happen.

Literature indicates that festivals are integral to Chinese villages. Chinese festivals date back to early imperial China and were related to astronomy, seasons and the calendar. The early forms of festivals involved primitive worship, religion and superstitions, as well as legends and stories (Fu, 2004). By the time of the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) several festivals were established as Chinese institutions, such as New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Lantern Festival, Shangsi Festival, Hanshi Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Double Seventh Festival, and Double Ninth Festival (China Info, 2009). In the middle ages, during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), these festivals were used as entertainment rather than for ancestral worship. Chinese festivals have adapted with the times, changing with the injection of new forms of religion and culture.

Chinese festivals have not only served as a form of amusement, but also as a site of trade and cultural development. Governments have used festivals to encourage moral development, academics to promote works, and farmers to exchange products (China Info, 2009). Due to the fluid nature of Chinese festivals, some have emerged, adapted and disappeared over time. But since the birth of the Republic in 1911, four major festivals have remained (the Spring Festival, Pure Brightness Festival, Dragon Boat Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival) (Fu, 2004). Several Western festivals have been assimilated in recent times (Valentine's Day, April Fools' Day, Mothers' Day and Christmas Day) (China Info, 2009).

During the reform era some local festivals were revived for local government political and economic purposes, but to village discontent. Faure and Siu (2005) looked at the 1994 celebration of a once-in-sixty-year Chrysanthemum Festival as an example of cultural strategy for commercial purposes that destroyed village culture. Villagers traditionally held this festival as a claim to valuable farmland based on lineage, but in the Mao era it was taken over to mark important revolutionary anniversaries (Siu, 1990). In the early 1980s the provincial and central government reconstructed Xiaolin Township as "The Chrysanthemum Town", and in 1994 when the festival returned, the township government used the Chrysanthemum Festival as a show piece

for Chinese modernisation and economic development (inviting thousands of high-profile guests from within China and overseas) (Faure & Siu, 2005). Villagers lost ownership of this traditional festival, and enthusiasm for it waned due to the lack of local participation.

There may be a multitude of ways that Chinese villages enhance cultural life through festivals. Whether festivals have any direct linkage to the average villager's concept of development is something this study may reveal.

Marriage is another example of how China's revolution and reform influenced village culture. Liu X. (2000) explains that marriage in rural China in the reform era had a mixture of 'traditional', 'revolutionary' or 'modern' components (p. 58). While Siu (1989) suggests that marriage is fashioned according to the socialist state's priorities, Harrell (1992) predicts that marriage is expected to take one of two paths: 1) a return to traditional practices (such as early marriage and high-bride price or dowry, or 2) changes based upon greater economic opportunities offered after China's opening up. Either way, Harrell (1992) suggests that:

> In areas where dowry declined with the elimination of status based on property in the collective era, it will increase faster than bride-price. At the same time, the predicted direction of modern change would also be in the direction of higher bride-price and dowry, for the simple reason that families now have more surplus wealth than ever to invest in signs of social status" (p. 325)

It appears that with marriage in a modern day Chinese village, dowry may be more important for social order than bride-price.

One case study highlights the mixture of tradition, revolution and modern in the marriage process in a village in Zhaojiahe in Northwestern China. Liu X. (2000) found marriage referred to *songxifu* ('to send') and *mainuzi* ('to sell"). Various marriage concepts were added over the years. During the Mao era the word *renwu* became prominent, which suggested it was a very important 'task' for parents to organise a marriage partner for a son or daughter (Liu X. 2000). In the 1950s, *tanhua* ('to have a word') was introduced, which involved a matchmaker organising a meeting between potential marriage couples after their families had reached a preliminary agreement. Liu X. (2000) suggests that during the Cultural Revolution it became popular and had official Party and political nuance, but that it also involved bride-price economics (compensation to the woman's family). This stage maintained traditional filial piety. After *tanhua* the next stage was *kanwu*, (another term introduced during Mao's revolution meaning 'to look to the courtyard'), which was used to assess the economic condition of the bride's family, and for the exchange of one-third of the bride-price. Following *kanwu* was *dinghun* ('to be engaged'), an engagement banquet to binding both families, during which another third of the bride-price was paid. The final stage of marriage was *guoshi* ('to celebrate the wedding'), which involved a shopping trip a few weeks before the wedding day whereby the bridegroom's family purchases gifts for the bride; and then the formal wedding ceremony at the bridegroom's family home (when the remaining third of

the bride-price was paid). Liu X. (2000) notes the shopping trip became a prominent feature of marriage during the market-oriented reform era.

Another custom of the Chinese village is food and eating. Food and eating culture is associated with individual, family and community stability. In Zhaojiehe village, for example, the exchange of steamed bread between villagers was used to build relationships to develop community. Zhaojiehe villagers often mention that "it is time to send some bread to our relatives" instead of "visiting a relative", which indicates the close connection between food and relationships (Liu X., 2000, p. 96). Food was very meaningful in this village for organising social life and community relationships. For example, the social aspect of eating was integrated into the Chinese calendar system and festivals. Another example is that the quality of food offered to guests customarily reflected the significance of that person. (While a common relative might eat bread with pickles and important guest might receive vegetables, fried eggs, and meat). Food and eating was central—the glue—to Zhaojiehe village life. This Zhaojiehe village example suggests that food and eating may represent stability in other villages of rural China.

It is important to consider the possible influence of the arts in the worldview of the modern-day villager. During the Reform Era, it is evident that modern Chinese art contributed significantly to the shaping of hearts and minds across the land. A greater freedom of expression within the arts began in the 1980s when the Party decided to shake off the utopianism of the Mao era. By the mid-1980s, China had reached, in Wang J.'s (1996) words, "high culture fever", with the Party splintering in its debate on modernisation, and with the non-Party intellectuals taking risks by becoming bolder and more vocal.

The 1985 publication of *The Ugly Chinaman* by a Taiwanese author, Bo Yang, sent huge waves through Chinese society, and became a point of discussion for a divided leadership. In this book, Bo Yang wanted to give China a wake-up call, and challenged it to shed the mob thinking of Confucianism, and to think independently for a brighter future. This quote typifies the tone of Yang's (1992, p. 7) book: "How have such a great people and nation degenerated into such ugliness? Not only have foreigners bullied us; what is worse, for centuries we've been tormented by our own kind—from tyrannical emperors to despotic officials and ruthless mobs".

Another risky work of art that captured popular Chinese culture was the 1988 television series *Heshang* (the Yellow River Elegy). Behind this six-part television series was a clarion call for modernisation, and it became widely popular in urban and rural China. It was a call to the Chinese people for maturity, to question the official historical narrative (Wei & Liu, 2001). In each series it subversively replaced traditional symbols with the modern. Yellow river was symbolic of traditional China (muddy, unclean, and tyrannical in nature), and the blue ocean represented Western civilisation. The titles of each episode were:

1) ‘In Search for a Dream’: which suggested that China is responsible for its backwardness, not the West;

2) ‘The Fate’: which looked at China’s vulnerable position when West met East in the nineteenth century, and China’s decision to seek stability and turn inwards;

3) ‘Halo’: which explored the decline of Chinese culture, science and technology after its great achievements of the Tang Dynasty;

4) ‘The New Era’: which looked at how China had failed to industrialise and modernise until the 1980s;

5) ‘Worries’: which focused on the collapse of Chinese society and the need for social, economic and cultural reforms;

6) ‘The Ocean Blue’: which dealt with the difficulties of the Ocean Blue West to access the bureaucratic and agricultural civilisation of the Yellow River, and that China could not renew itself and need the help of the West to modernise.

Wang (1996) described this series as driving deep into the national psyche the idea that the state and its enlightenment project could not itself direct China’s modernisation in the right way. *Heshang* was bold in that it attempted to “reconstruct the psychological structure if the nation” (Wei & Liu 2001, p. 217). The Yellow River Elegy—watched by 600 million viewers at the time—opened up (awakened) China’s culture in ways that could not have been imagined during the Mao days.

Over recent decades the usage of television, internet and mobile phone has had the power to transform China’s culture on a wide scale. In 2004, a survey found that China now has 1.2 billion television viewers, and another statistic revealed that cable television viewers numbered 116 million in 2005 (Kang 2008, p. 326). In terms of the internet—which was introduced in 1987—China has had a boom, with 123 million internet users recorded in mid-2006, largely from urban areas aged under thirty (Kang 2008, p. 330). Mobile phones—introduced in the mid-1990s—which are also changing values and lifestyles were used by some 443 million subscribers by mid-2006 (Kang 2008, p. 335). The remainder of this section offers a few details as to the degree to which these modes of communication may have influenced the culture of the average Chinese village.

On television: In the 1980s there was an increasing interest in overseas dramas, particularly foreign serial plays from Japan and the U.S., but it was not until 1990 with the Chinese drama ‘Yearnings’—“a [50-episode] melodramatic portrayal of the lives of ordinary citizens during the

Cultural Revolution" (Kang, 2008, p. 327)—that drama interest increased. In 2004, popular genres included (in rank from the most popular): "romance, domestic drama, martial arts, romantic and youth idol drama, crime, revolutionary drama, history", and more (Kang, 2008, p. 327). Other popular dramas were drawn from China's classical literature such as *Dream of the Red Chamber* (1987), *Journey to the West* (1986), *Romance of Three Kingdoms* (1995), and *Dragon's Eight Tribes* (2004), to name a few among many historical dramas focused on famous Chinese emperors.

On the internet: Online activities included reading news (66 per cent); chat rooms and forums (43 per cent); job hunting, commercial activities, health and government services (39 per cent); watching videos (35 per cent) and blogging (30 per cent) (Kang, 2008, p. 331). Blogging has become popular with 17 million bloggers, mostly college educated, aged between 20 and 35, and urban (Kang 2008, p. 331). Blogging enabled young Chinese to air views in journal format on most topics (political, cultural, and ideological), but they are not permitted to challenge Party authority.

On mobile phones: Kang (2008, p. 335) described the usage of text messaging as follows:

> Text messages in China contain anything from simple greetings and personal com*mu*nications, to comic passages or jokes (duanzi), mostly on politics and sex (often combined), to domestic and international news and commentary. The political and sex jokes poignantly denigrate corrupt and inept bureaucrats and satarize social phenomena from rampant egoism to moral degeneration, extramarital affairs and prostitution.

Various modes of media enabled greater expressions of culture during the reform era, but it is not clear how these modes of communication influenced the culture of the average village. Oakes and Schein (2005) suggest that the mass media significantly transformed the local in China; and that it is occurring at an alarming speed. They believe that the phenomenon of media-induced, virtual reality and fantasy as a social practice—the possibility of the imagination in many places at once—is likely to occur in a Chinese village as anywhere in the modern globalised world.

This section presented several ways that the modern-day Chinese village cultural dynamic may have changed. It gave examples of how government policy influenced local village culture, and suggested more informal, common themes of local village culture that are at work across rural China. It will be interesting to see which aspects of culture are discussed for this study.

2.5.6 Spiritual

In Chinese village culture there are many gods or goddesses depending on folklore (e.g. the kitchen god, harvest god, sea goddess) (Smith, 1968; Berthrong, 1994). Folk religion has been practiced as a means to receive benefits (good luck and fortune) through fortune telling, spirit-mediums, and geomancy (Tamney, 2005). As discussed in the 'cultural' section, the religion of the average Chinese village was connected with the temple and based on ancestral lineage (honoured with Confucian rituals such as filial piety). Folk religionists also borrowed from

Buddhist (karma and rebirth) and Daoist beliefs (*yin* and *yang*) (Tamney, 2005). The section titled 'Concepts on Chinese Development' explained the basic tenets of these three Chinese traditions, so this section focuses on a few examples of spiritual revival at the local level during the reform era.

At the state level, the central government's policy on religion recognises Buddhism, Daoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam, but they are not allowed autonomy from state control. Central government policy forbids superstitious practices such as fortune telling, divination, exorcism, and healing (Spiegel, 2004).

There were several religious trends in the reform era (Tamney, 2005). First, greater tolerance of religion in China since the mid-1980s resulted in a revival of all religions. Second, there was a renaissance of traditional culture in rural China (Pomfret, 1998). Third, Buddhism has been undergoing a revival (Yang & Wei, 2005), and Christianity experienced a remarkable upsurge, particularly in poorer rural areas, with a rapid increase in Protestantism (Madsen, 2000; Kindopp, 2004).

There have been many examples of temple revival in village life during the reforms. Flower and Leonard (1998) suggest that renewed interest in temples occurs where the state still plays a 'strong role' in the everyday lives of villagers. They argued that temples represent a social place for resistance to the state in such instances.

Flower and Leonard (1998) spent 1991-1993 living in an agricultural (corn-growing), mountain village in Sichuan province, and concluded that the Chuan Zhu temple revival in that village was due to the 'moral' chaos that ensued in the political, economic, and social changes of the reform era. The authors explain that because farmers were at odds with corruption and taxation burdens of local government, in 1992 the temple became a new place to increase the public sphere. Flower and Leonard (1998) note that temple renewal in this region was met with suspicion by local government, and that it branded temple practices as traditional superstition.

In the Chuan Zhu temple revival story it was evident that local officials had no option but to allow its reopening; forced by a series of mysterious events, and the temples subsequent popularity growth (Flower & Leonard, 1998). It was two 'miraculous' incidents that led to the temple's opening. (Before explaining these two events, it is important to note that traditional village practice was to take the Chuan Zhu statue to another temple in the township during the rainy reason festival to ensure flood protection). On the first occasion two government officials tried to sabotage the festival by burning the statue's clothes. The attempt failed: the clothes did not burn. On the second occasion officials knocked the statue's head off the day before the festival to find that a large flood had swept through the area, destroying three houses and the local high school (which meant that classes were held in the township officials' offices).

These events brought about the spiritual revival of the Chuan Zhu god, and resulted in increased prophecies for people to repent their evil ways. Other temples sprang up in the area due to spiritual revival, and other deities, such as the goddess of mercy *Guanyin* made a comeback (Flower & Leonard, 1998). The government eventually decided to support the Chuan Zhu temple on the grounds that villagers would not practice superstition, and it agreed not to take any fee from the temple's tourist revenue. During the festival of the Chuan Zhu god, the officials came to pay homage to show they were interested in cultivating 'spiritual civilisation' under their jurisdiction.

There are instances of temple revival during the reform era where temples opened as 'temple firms'. Temple firms started as either newly built temples or as temples revived in the name of a traditional deity. These temples opened China's polytheistic tradition to a modern-day, commercial, supermarket of worship experiences. As temple firms became commercially successful in one area, soon other temples rose up in competition. An example of the 'temple firm' is the Wong Tai Sin temple in the Zhejiang and Guangdong regions. The god of these temples, written about in 4th century Daoist texts, was a hermit who had attained immortality. The last temple dedicated to him was destroyed in the 1950s in Jinhua, Zhejiang. However, in the 1890s a new sect of the god arose in Guangdong, and later moved to Hong Kong during the Republican period. In the late 1980s, there was a revival of this deity in many areas of Zhejiang and Guangdong, with one shrine and nine new Wong Tai Sin temples being built before the end of the century.

These Wong Tai Sin temples ranged from a small hut in a rural peasant village, to a medium sized rural temple, to grand palaces in rural, suburban and urban areas (Lang, Chan, & Ragvald, 2005). Research shows that the small village temples were visited by local villagers only; the medium sized rural temples were visited by local people from the city, local villagers, and mainland Chinese tourists (apart from the Hong Kong based temple which attracted Taiwanese tourists because it was owned by a Taiwanese entrepreneur); the very large rural temples attracted tourists, local urbanites, and local villagers; the very large suburban temples clientele included villagers, local urbanites, and tourists; and the very large urban temples attracted tourists from Guangzhou and the Pearl River Delta region (Lang, Chan, & Ragvald, 2005). Most temples were either opened by independent entrepreneurs, or private entrepreneurs in conjunction with the government. Only a few were operated by villagers. The example of the Wong Tai Sin temple study indicates that whilst temple revival has often been a business, it has also been a genuine attempt to revive historical sites and local culture, and perhaps in some cases for religious purposes. Case studies of the Chuan Zhu temple and the Wong Tai Sin temples suggest that temple revival has been strong, and that reasons for religious revival may be varied and quite localised.

2.5.7 Environmental

Much has been written about China's growing environmental problems in relation to its rapid economic growth, and its need for sustainable development. Statistics explaining China's environmental problems are many. This study, however, is about the Chinese village context, so while it briefly looks at the State's environmental concerns, it mainly focuses on literature covering rural China, particularly the increasing air, water, and soil pollution problems created by TVEs during the reform era.

The central government expressed its concern for China's environment throughout the reform era, and particularly during Hu's presidency (Guthrie 2008, Fewsmith, 2010). Environmental concern is perhaps traditionally part of the Chinese psyche, with the Daoist tradition stipulating the importance of humanity working in harmony with nature (King, 1926; Littlejohn, 2010). In July 1992, the central government published *The Chinese Agenda for the 21st Century* based on the June 1992 (Rio de Janeiro) Word Summit on Environment and Development document *The Agenda for the 21st Century*. In this publication the central government committed itself to the following sustainable development obligations:

> .....protect all life supporting systems; protect the integrity of ecological systems and biodiversity; address major ecological issues such as soil erosion and desertification; protect natural resources; maintain sustainable supply capabilities; reduce damage to fragile ecological systems; extend forest coverage; improve urban and rural environmental conditions; prevent and control environmental damage and pollution; reclaim and restore damaged and polluted environments; take an active part in international cooperation in the fields of environmental and ecological protection (People's Republic of China).

The central government became serious about addressing China's growing pollution in the late 1990s and early 2000s when it upgraded the environmental protection ministry at the 1998 National Peoples' Congress, and ratified 430 sets of regulations at the central government level, and 1,020 sets of regulations, standards and ordinances at the local government level (Managi & Kaneko 2010, p. 12). It also agreed to the Kyoto Protocol in September 2002, which was aimed at reducing greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulphur hexafluoride), and two groups of gases (hydrofluorocarbons and perfluorocarbons) in the name of worldwide sustainable development. China has supported environmental sustainability as a party to the MDGs, with its seventh goal being to 'ensure environmental sustainability'.

TVEs have been identified as the major reform era environmental polluters. Tilt (2006, p. 115) suggests that TVEs across China are responsible for 60 per cent of China's air pollution. Literature indicates that polluting TVEs significantly affected air, water and soil and threatened ecosystems (with large amounts of sulphur dioxide damaging forests and agricultural crops) and human wellbeing (respiratory illnesses and heart disease) (Muldavin, 2000; Cao, Garbaccio & Ho, 2009; Managi & Kaneko, 2010). Cao et al (2009) suggest the environmental pollution problem is linked to budgetary constraints on local governments which are forced to pursue economic growth

at the expense of the local environment. In recent years the central government attempted to address TVE pollution in its 11th Five-Year Plan by: 1) close down small and inefficient power plants, and 2) install Flue Gas Desulfurization (FGD) on existing coal-fired power plants. Another initiative was that local officials are reportedly being promoted based on environmental performances (Cao, Garbaccio & Ho, 2009). Nevertheless, literature indicates that there is poor implementation of environmental policy and poor environmental management at local levels (Tilt, 2006; Naughton, 2010).

One interesting ethnographic study, conducted in Futian Township in south-western Sichuan province, looked at perceptions of local villagers on industrial pollution in relation to the introduction of TVEs in their municipality in the 1980s (to supply China's third largest iron and steel plant) (Tilt, 2006). The study found despite common perceptions poor villagers were unconcerned about environmental risks of TVEs, villagers of Futian were keenly aware of the associated heath and economic risks. Tilt (2006, p. 120) highlighted seven common themes that villagers' narratives focused upon:

1) Direct health effects (94%)
2) Damage to plants or crops (63.9%)
3) Damage to visibility or scenery (63.9%)
4) Threats to animal health (38.9%)
5) Economic losses (22.2%)
6) Treats on the food chain (13.9%)
7) Threats to longevity (12.0%)

One major environmental problem villagers historically faced (indeed, the whole nation), and more so during the reform era, is desertification (Muldavin, 2000; Ho, 2010). Desertification started on a large-scale in ancient times but rapidly increased during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) due to expansion and urban construction (Muldavin, 1997). It is still a concern today. Beijing Youth Daily and CASS (2004, p. 185) indicate that in the 1950s and 60s, desertification was happening at 1,560 square kilometres annually, and this increased to 2,100 square kilometres in the 70s. They reported that the desertification rate went from 2,100 square kilometres annually in the 1980s to 3,456 square kilometres annually by 2004. Ho (2010, p. 101) estimates that desertification has affected 34 per cent of Chinese land—3.3 million square kilometres.

During China's reform era there was a swing back to ancient farming practices for sustainable development purposes. In ancient China, to cope with an increasing population and territorial expansion, Muldavin (1997) notes that the Han Chinese developed good farming practices such as recycling animal and human waste. He lists several Chinese farming practices (crop-rotation, inter-planting, and organic manures) that prevented soil erosion and increased yields, improved

soil fertility, and protected crops from insects. Sanders (2000) advises that Mao abandoned these ancient sustainable farming practices, and approached farming with a technical innovation and grain production emphasis. The reform era saw a shift away from Mao's agricultural policy towards more environmentally sustainable approaches: for example, since the early 1980s, China introduced the Chinese Ecological Agriculture (CEA) approach to rural farming.

The CEA approach was an attempt to embrace "modern scientific agricultural techniques" while turning back to the imperial sustainable farming practices (Sanders, 2000, p. 236). Cheng, Han, and Taylor (1992) indicate that the CEA's aim is to benefit the environment with the prevention of soil erosion, afforestation, better waste management, energy conservation, and clean energy. However, it does not just target farming practices (it also considers increasing economic and social expectations). Cheng, Han, and Taylor (1992) list the conceptual basis of CEA:

1) It is holistic in that it considers all the environmental impacts of production when using a locality's natural resources;

2) It encourages the consideration of time and space in production (intercropping and multilayer farming);

3) It promotes the integration of production systems. For example, the use of a by-product of one system for use in another;

4) It has better ecological management practices that discourage the use of chemicals and fertilisers, increase afforestation, and generate energy from renewable resources such as wind, sun and biogas;

5) It encourages the diversification of production.

The CEA has not been without its problems. Whilst these measures offer sound agriculturally sustainable development practices, they may not work with small-scale farming that followed de-collectivisation in the early 1980s. This is because immediately after Deng instituted agricultural reform, peasants found the enthusiasm to earn higher income elsewhere rather than through seeking better farming practices. Many farmers fled the farming industry for non-agricultural pursuits, but those who continued in agriculture tended to farm for short-term gain rather than long-term productivity. Another problem with small-scale farming is that it has not been economical, although the central government recently introduced a policy to subsidise farmers, to encourage them to keep farming (Fewsmith, 2010). (Li 1995, p. 7 and 9) explains:

> Because of the large population and limited land resources, the household scale of crop farming in China is very small. The small scale of crop production has resulted in low productivity, especially in East China where the level is much higher than other regions... The small farming scale also affects the use of agro-machinery, especially the large scale machines.

and,

> Low economic profit of crops farming activity is the most restrictive factor blocking the sustainable development of crops production in China. The reasons for low profits [include].... small production scale

The CEA, however, has worked in certain areas in China. In the 1980s, the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) focused on CEA projects in many villages (1200 villages, but also 138 at township level and 29 at county level), then in 1993 it shifted to eco-counties (starting with 50 models) (Saunders 2000, p. 240). Sanders (2000) researched seven of the model CEA villages and four eco-counties that authorities considered successful. He found that in each of the seven villages, organic farming methods outweighed chemical fertiliser use in a ratio of 70:30; intercropping and multilayer farming was used; animal husbandry was advanced; management of waste was good; solar and biogas energy was used to reduce the use of fossil fuels (Sanders, 2000). Moreover, reforestation happened to 25 per cent of the land area; villagers had specialised food production (turtles, fish, oysters, mushrooms); and non-polluting production of goods had been linked to farming activities such as Beijing duck, bamboo furniture, and abattoirs (Sanders, 2000). These villages were 'models' and therefore exhibits of the central government (and therefore attracted high levels of support), nevertheless, they demonstrated that CEA is a realistic achievement.

There are several factors that made these CEA village projects successful. The first was the political agency of village leaders and wealth. When each village adopted the CEA approach they were reasonably rich and had leaders that were well respected and established in their communities (they were made leaders either before or during the Cultural Revolution). Another factor was the successful management of biogas facilities and the collective nature of the village. Sanders (2000) found that two villages never de-collectivised after Deng's reforms, and two had done so but returned to a collective village. It was the collectively arranged villages that were able to manage biogas facilities effectively so that all households were readily supplied with energy.

Another study supported the theory that collectives are better for good environmental outcomes and sustainable development. Muldavin (2000) looked at three villages in Henan province, and found that in the village that had re-collectivised, households were: less vulnerable; had limited household-level pollution; their productive assets were conserved through collective ownership; and they achieved high incomes. In the village that had de-collectivised, households experienced: high vulnerability; lower input and lower productivity (lack of cash); destruction of communal capital; loss of soil fertility; and increased fees, taxes and fines imposed by local officials. The study showed that the level of villager entitlements and access to resources had a major bearing on the environment and sustainable development.

The lesson of the Sanders (2000) and Muldavin (2000) studies is that rural land reform—to allow for private collective ownership—may be required if villagers are to achieve environmentally

sustainable livelihoods. Fewsmith (2010) indicates that this has started to happen (see also Ho, 2010). CEA may only be popularised where large-scale farming opportunities are made available to entrepreneurial and innovative farmers. Sanders (2000) suggests it is important that collective arrangements not undo the free market achievements of the reform era, and that farmers who willingly give up land leases in the name of large-scale farming be adequately compensated. This farming approach may stem the tide of polluting TVEs that encroach upon valuable farming land. It may also stem the tide of urban migration and the loss of a village's human resource capital.

2.6 Summary

The literature review highlighted many theories and cultural aspects of development that may be evident in a present-day Chinese village context. It was by no means comprehensive, but written as a way of understanding some possible concepts of development diffused to villages over history. Some theories and themes are more likely found in some Chinese villages than others. Given China's vastness and mysteriousness, some were undoubtedly missed. It is impossible to cover every development idea, policy, theory and theme. What it did cover were the formal and informal institutions of Western development theories, Chinese state-level themes, and it provided statistics and qualitative examples of life in particular Chinese villages in recent times.

The theories and themes of this literature review were used as a menu of items that guided discussions on development with households in the village case study. Chapter four explains the methodology used in the attempt to evoke rich, deep, and meaningful stories.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

> Clearly one good case can illuminate the working of a social system in a way that a series of morphological statements cannot achieve (Gluckman1961).

3.1 Primary Research Question

Research topic: An Identification of the Meaning(s) of 'Development' in a Chinese Village Context: The First Piece of a Jigsaw Puzzle

The intellectual puzzle for this research is that it is not known how Chinese villagers conceptualise development. Therefore, the aim of this study is to locate the meaning of 'development' within the context of a Chinese village.

Research Sub-Question

How one should measure development has been extensively discussed within development studies literature. Several academics over the last three decades have suggested that development measurements need to go beyond economics (Chambers, 1983; Sen, 1999; Escobar, 1995; Pieterse, 2010). The Human Development Index (HDI, introduced in 1990) was the result of a more people-centred focus but it also came under criticism for being inadequate (Chambers, 2005; Alkire, 2007; Willis, 2011). Scholars were concerned that the HDI failed to recognise broader dimensions of development (Doyal & Gough, 1993; Nussbaum, 2000; Narayan-Parker, 2000; Camfield, 2005).

One study claims to encompass all dimensional categories for measuring development. Ife and Tesoriero (2006) suggest that community development evaluation involves six dimensions: political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and personal/spiritual. They assert that although these dimensions are found within any community, not all dimensions have equal priority (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006).

The six categories were used in this study as parameters in the interviewing process, as the sub-question areas. Each dimension represented a spotlight or doorway into meanings of development.

Dimension of Development	*Basic definition (from The Collins English Dictionary)*	*Area of discussion (issues that villagers may discuss in the interviews)*
Social 社会的	Human society or any of its subdivisions	education, health, migration, social security, aged pensions, maternal and child care, gender equality
Economic 经济	Production and consumption of goods and services	the market, trade between village and outsiders/foreigners, types of business enterprises, village revenue and spending, economic growth (GDP), employment, technology, land ownership
Political 政治	To the state, government, public administration, and policy-making	elections, organisational structure, ideology (communism, democracy), power, political parties, the law and justice (human rights)
Cultural 文化	Ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge	mass media (internet, mobile phone, television), the arts (festivals, literature, performances), folklore, traditional practices, language
Spiritual/personal 精神	Spirit or soul and not physical nature or matter	spirits, god, afterlife, geomancy, ancestral worship
Environmental 环境的	External conditions or surroundings (esp. those in which one works or lives)	sustainability, climate change, farming practices, pollution (air, water, land)

Table 1 Menu of discussion items

The 'areas of discussion' listed in the third column of Table 1 are examples of topics from the literature review that served as interview menu of items. These items did not represent structured sub-questions, but were a guide to test themes inductively and to spark stories (Jorgensen, 1989). Menu items may or may not have been significant in the selected village. It was hoped that villagers would raise new topics not covered in the literature review.

3.2 Research Design

Research aim: To identify the meaning of development within the context of a single village

Research objective: to produce in-depth narratives on 'development' with villagers within six household case studies

3.2.1 Epistemology

Epistemology answers "How can we know 'reality'?" To address this question there are three broad research paradigms: positivist, realism and relativism (Sumner & Tribe, 2008). The assumption behind each is described in the Table 2:

	Positivism	Realism	Relativism
What is reality?	There is one reality which is observable	There is a reality which exists independently of the researcher which can be described	There are multiple realities, which can be experienced
What is the aim of knowledge inquiry?	Acquisition of a single truth – in the form of a universal general law	To describe reality. It is not possible to establish the truth about reality	A more informed construction or understanding
How does the researcher relate to the researched?	The researcher is objective and independent of the researched	The researcher and their thoughts are part of the reality. The researcher is a dependent observer	The researcher is subjective and is not independent of the researched

Table 2 Epistemological assumptions (Source: Sumner & Tribe, 2008, p. 59)

Realism was the epistemology underpinning this study. The particular type of realism was 'embodied realism' which suggests that 1) knowledge is distributed; and 2) there is a diversity of perceptions and knowledge (Byrne & Tye, 2006, p. 241). Nooteboom (2007, p. 138) indicates it is the equivalent of symbolic interactionism, and that it "connects with the 'structure-agency' problem" (also Geertz, 1973). At the core of embodied realism is the understanding that "people conduct perception, interpretation, understanding, preference formation, and value judgements on the basis of mental categories that they construct in interaction with others" (Nooteboom, 2007, p. 138). Lakoff and Johnson (1999) suggest that people form mental structures when interacting with the (physical and social) world and that reality is embodied through experiences. On a continuum with the positivist epistemology at one end and relativism at the other, embodied realism sits closer to the later. Embodied realism requires an interpretive approach to data collection because it is based on sensory perceptions. As this study aims to describe reality, it was appropriate to use a qualitative research.

3.2.2 Methodology

Cultural anthropology was the research methodology used, with an ethnographic case study used as the strategy. Mitchell (1983) suggests that the case study can be used when the researcher is testing a general theoretical principle or notion or is gathering knowledge or test a hypothesis within a given context. An ethnographic study is a cultural study that seeks deeper meanings within a culture based on story-telling and observations (Spradley, 1979; Fetterman, 1998). Therefore, the researcher's aim is to employ data collection methods inductively, and to be as unobtrusive as possible, because the aim of ethnography is to write about insider's views—their meanings—on a topic (Spradley, 1979; Fetterman, 1998). As this study aims to identify the

meaning of ‘development’ in an in-depth manner in single Chinese village context, the ethnographic case study strategy is appropriate.

3.2.3 Methods

Four methods were used: *case study*; *naturalistic observation*; *qualitative interviewing* (in-depth: semi-structured and informal); and *photography*. This section describes and justifies the use of each method.

Single case study (with multiple household cases)

There are numerous definitions concerning case studies. The following two definitions represent a broad understanding of the case study: 1) “An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when—the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which—multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin 2003, p. 13), and; 2) “… the systematic presentation of information about the life of a single unit” , and this may be an event, a culture or an individual life (Runyan 1982, p. 443-444). Case studies may also be considered a research strategy, whereby the dynamics of a single setting are systematically analysed to acquire a sharp understanding of why an event happened as it did (Eisenhardt, 1989). Researchers using the case study method are testing a general theoretical principle or notion to gather knowledge or test a hypothesis within a given context (Mitchell, 1983). This study attempts to generate knowledge on the concept of development in a Chinese village by testing potential concepts in that setting.

For this study, six multiple (instrumental) household case studies were used in tandem to produce a single (intrinsic) village case study. Sources of evidence used were qualitative interviews, naturalistic observation, and visual ethnography. Data gathered in one household were often tested in another to enable a larger picture of development to gradually emerge. Key themes were identified across each household with the aim of writing a village account. The justification for using multiple household case studies was first to acquire rich conceptualisations of development in each household, then to use these cases to identify deeper meanings in the village context (Stake, 2005).

The singe case study method is criticised for its lack of generalizability and its reliance on verification (that data are verified according to a preconceived hypothesis) (Cronbach, 1975; Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 1994), but several academics have highlighted its validity for science (Kuhn, 1970 [1962]; Ragin & Becker, 1992; Stake, 1995; Flyvbjerg, 2006). First, it is argued that all scientific research has a bias (Kuhn, 1970), but what case studies offer are a real practical experience and detailed and nuanced views of reality that may be missed in rule-based studies (Campbell, 1975; Stake, 1995). Moreover, research shows that the majority of qualitative

case study researchers have had hypotheses significantly altered once faced with social realities in the local context (Flyvbjerg, 2006), which suggests that "case studies are better for testing hypotheses than producing them" (Eckstien, 1975, p. 80). On the criticism of generalizability, Flyvbjerg (2006, p. 228) argues that an intrinsic single case study can be used as a "force of example" and as a "supplement or alternative to other methods", but that the selection of the case study needs to be typical or of strategic importance. While this intrinsic, in-depth village case study may not be generalised, the results can be tested and used as a force of example in other typical Chinese villages.

The justification for using the single case study method (with six embedded case studies) is because it is considered to be the best method for attaining a deep and rich understanding of a particular context (Yin, 1984; Stake, 1995). It is suggested that by spending a considerable amount of time with numerous respondents, and by interviewing a wide range of people, a holistic, detailed, and complex picture can emerge through the case study approach (Keeves, 1988; Stake, 1995).

The qualitative case study approach also makes it possible to build a good rapport. Whilst the literature review provides a good basis from which to test ideas in the village, it is perhaps the building of trust that determines the richness and depth of the data. Yin (1984) suggests that qualitative case studies provide in-depth information through good rapport. Good rapport enables the researcher to acquire more personal, candid, and detailed data (Denzin, 1978a). Without this, it is possible that only shallow, surface phenomenon can be evoked rather than the deeper, core values (Geertz, 1988). Rapport is perhaps more crucial in a closely knit Chinese village where outsiders might be viewed with suspicion (Fei, 1992). By using the qualitative case study method, substantial knowledge on 'development' can best be achieved.

Naturalistic observation

Naturalistic observation was used throughout the fieldwork: to gather ideas for interviews (to include or discard topics) and during the interviews (with the interview considered as a behavioural event in itself) (Miles & Huberman, 1994). During the initial stage of the fieldwork, naturalistic observation was used in an unobtrusive manner (Denzin, 1978b; Yin, 1984). The aim was to learn about the village (its culture and customs) and casually (naturally) chat with some locals (Bruyn, 1966; Denzin, 1978; Guba & Lincoln, 1981), to build trust and rapport (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

Naturalistic observation was also used unobtrusively during the household interviews. Qualitative interviews allowed the researcher to hold conversations in a natural, relaxed, and less formal way (Denzin, 1978). During interviews, observations such as facial expressions, hand gestures, tone of voice were often noted to enhance the richness of meaning(s) (Douglas, 1985). The natural setting

of each interview also provided the researcher with an opportunity to note the symbols, objects and activities that provided meaning in the respondent's daily life (Bruyn, 1966; Geertz, 1973).

Qualitative interviewing (in-depth and semi-structured)

The interviewing approach was in-depth and semi-structured. A menu of items (based on the literature review and natural observation) was prepared for interviews. How these items were discussed was determined by the interviewer throughout the course of each interview (Mishler, 1986; Hammersley, 1993; Chambers, 2008). Hancock and Algozzine (2006) suggest that the advantage of this approach is that data collection becomes more systematic (that the interviewer knows what needs to be covered), but not so rigid as to prevent new ideas and themes emerging. Semi-structured interviews allow for conversational and situational events (Mishler, 1989; Silverman, 2001).

The qualitative interview method was chosen for several reasons. First, its open-ended nature is a good way for respondents to challenge, negotiate, disagree or affirm any of the proposed issues, assumptions and concepts (Patton, 1980; Mishler, 1989). Second, qualitative (semi-structured) interviews allows rapport-building with respondents, and may act as a pre-test for a more informal discussion time later (Douglas, 1985; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Third, it enables items to be added as respondents raise new issues and perspectives (Bryman & Burgess, 1994). Fourth, researchers are able to delve deeper into the complexity of meanings (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005)

Visual ethnography (photography)

Photography as a method is not always necessary, but it was used in this study to add a sensory dimension. It is argued that visual ethnography is a useful method when it adds to the phenomenon—produces wider possibilities of meaning—in ways that may not be available under other methods (McKeown, 1982). It may also be useful for verifying and clarifying data gathered from other methods (Mason, 2002). Mason (2002, p. 104) explains the benefits of visual methods to the epistemology of research: "The idea that everything we are interested in exists in language or text, or is expressible in those ways, and that we can explore it using words or reading text, can be argued to be a rather limited and uncreative one". Emmison and Smith (2000, p.4) note that the usefulness of photography is "in recording the seen dimensions of social life". Researchers using this method tend to have a semiotic worldview "which suggests that written words, texts, documents, records, objects, visual or spatial phenomena or aspects of social organization, shape, form, and so on, are meaningful constituents of the social world in themselves..." (Mason, 2002, p. 106).

It was considered that valuable data might be added to this study by asking respondents to take photographs on the theme of development (Denzin, 1978a). Within each household, respondents

were asked to take photographs on development after several discussions. Villagers often felt reluctant to use the researcher's camera, but they were willing to identify images that represented development in their daily lives or in the village. The researcher took photographs of each scene or object. In the follow-up discussion the photographs were used identify or delve deeper into development-related topics.

The justification for using visual ethnography was the qualitative nature of the research. Photographs added another dimension to villagers' stories and evoked further valuable discussion (Denzin, 1978b). In the final written account, images also enable readers to connect with villagers' narratives, to acquire a better appreciation of the household and village context. Photographs show that these are real stories about real people.

3.2.4 Fieldwork logistics

How the Methods Fit Together in the Field

Figure 7 indicates how the various methods were used in the field. Figure 8 (page 75) illustrates how the fieldwork shifted from the outer to the inner world of the village. This was the strategy for gaining access to the six households. The first stage of the fieldwork was to observe the village in the preparation of household interviews. Next, after the interview process began in tandem across the households, ideas and themes were tested between households and with the village. Data collection was integrated and cumulative with the aim of building toward deeper meanings.

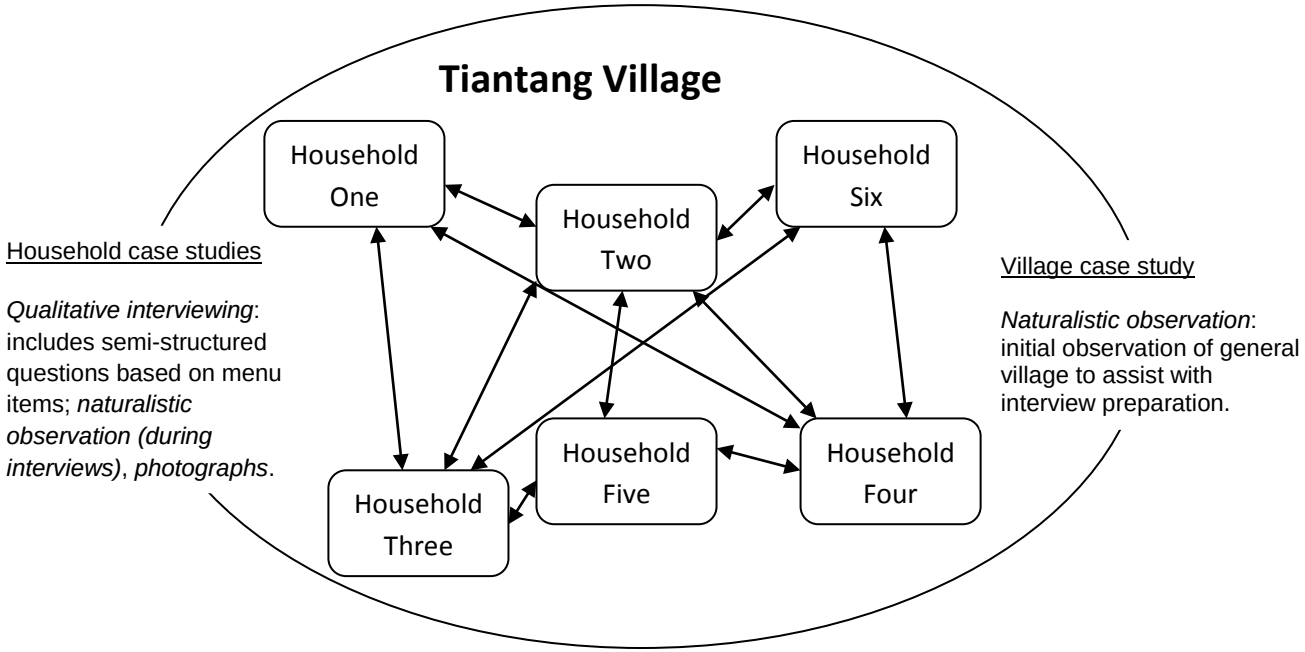


Figure 7 How the methods fit together

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis was a single village in rural Sichuan province. It was strategically selected because the Chinese government's has a 'Go West' policy to develop Western China, so it was considered that a Sichuan village might be a good place to study concepts of development. The village was studied as an intrinsic case study for later testing in other parts of rural China. Within the village case study were six instrumental household case studies.

Sample population

Probability sampling was the sampling method used, which involved random selection. Bryman (2004, p 538) proposes that by using random sampling "each unit of the population has equal probability of inclusion in the sample", but it was not used with the intention of generalising the results to other villages. Specifically, the *cluster sampling* strategy was employed. It was selected because it has been suggested that Chinese society tends to be collective (or group) orientated (The Chinese Culture Connection, 1987).

The cluster sample was organised by dividing the original *Tiantang* village into sections. Households were randomly selected from within each cluster. Although it was discovered that two other villages had recently been joined to *Tiantang* village, one was one kilometre away, and the other could not be located. Villagers in the original *Tiantang* village had a long history, and it appeared that the three villages effectively lived as separate entities, apart from the possible common usage of the *Munan* Township. The villager who advised of the amalgamation only knew a few elderly people in the second village, and did not know where the third was.

Access to households was achieved through the assistance of a language translator. It involved knocking on doors within each cluster until an interview request was accepted. Households were generally eager to participate in the study; only a few rejected an interview (because of embarrassment over a lack of education). The household samples had mixed demographic situations. There were wealthy and poor households, a good ratio of males to females, a wide variety of businesses, various political backgrounds, and with ages ranging from the 30s to the 80s. There was also a household of transient business migrants. After gaining access to each household, the objective was to interview as many members as possible (those adults able and willing to participate). However, it was often the household leader who became the main respondent of the group.

Data collection methods

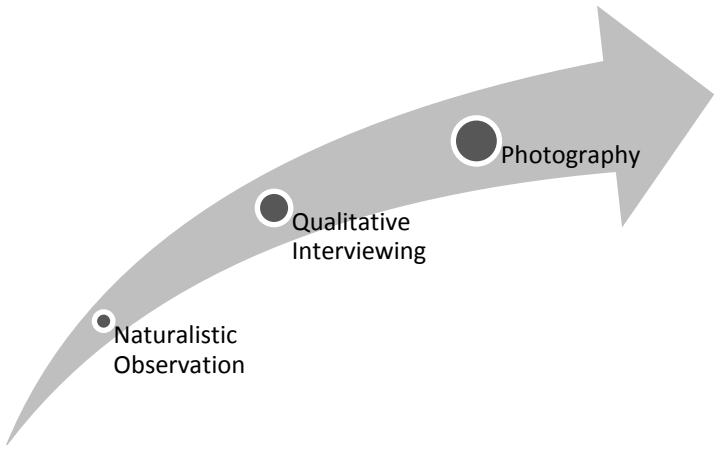


Figure 8 Data collection progression

Figure 8 indicates how the data collection gradually built from a naturalistic inquiry, to qualitative interviewing, to photography as the researcher moved from the periphery to the core of village life. The fieldwork did not necessarily move in such a clear linear and incremental direction; it often involved cyclical patterns whereby a particular discovery saw the process start again (on that specific discovery or issue).

Role of the language translator

The selection of the language translator was vital for quality data collection. Some twenty interviews were conducted to identify several translators with high level English language skills and a minimum of a bachelor degree, and who could demonstrate good social skills. Three translators of a high standard were selected: two with a bachelor degree (one with an English literature major, the other with Chinese teaching); the other completing a master degree in Chinese teaching. Prior to each interview, the researcher briefed translators with the strategy for the forthcoming interview.

The translation of 'development' in Mandarin: According to a popular Chinese dictionary, *Xinhua Dictionary*, 'development' is translated as *fazhan* (发展). Its definition entry is as follows:

> 事物由小到大、由简单到复杂、由低级到高级的变化：e.g.:事态还在～丨社会～规律。

From this definition, the Chinese officially understand *fazhan* as "things from small to large, from simple to complex, from low-level to high-level change". The Oxford University Press' *Concise English-Chinese Chinese-English Dictionary* confirms the translation of the word 'development' as *fazhan.* During interviews the language translator used the word *fazhan* for 'development'.

Interview procedure

Discussions usually started by explaining the purpose of the interview, followed by small talk, which led into villagers' stories about daily life and activities. Menu items from the six dimension

categories were raised in each interview. Villagers were asked to comment of a menu item, with the researcher listening and asking probing questions for details and examples. Issues that were not clear were clarified or verified during the conversation or in a follow-up interview. Interviews went for one or two hours; sometimes longer when an invitation to lunch was involved.

Post-activity data management

The data were managed progressively throughout the fieldwork (Ezzy, 2002). After each interview the researcher (with translator) made audio notes about the issues discussed, what was said, and events and observations. In the evening or the following day these notes were transcribed into a notebook then typed into household case study word processing files. Midway through the fieldwork a second set of development theme files were opened to bring together and analyse emerging themes. Later, when sufficient data had been gathered, the official household case study files were opened.

The data were kept secure at all times. The notebook was kept securely in a locked bag, and the electronic data (case study notes file, the case study file, audio notes, and photographs) were stored on a virus-protected laptop computer and uploaded to a commercial storage website.

Data analysis

The initial focus of the data collection was to obtain as much unstructured data as possible (Douglas, 1985; Dey, 1993). These data were then classified under emerging themes of development. It was understood that after one or two interviews in each household, the boundaries between the themes would be implicit, "fuzzy and overlapping"(Dey 1993, p. 20) but no data were excluded altogether. But as the researcher began to test themes and seek verification across the households, clearer data clusters started to form. After clear themes and patterns emerged (from the interviews, field notes, and photographs), it became possible to formulate and describe concepts with greater depth and insight (Kroeber, 1963 [1923]; Patton, 1980).

Dey (1993, p. 30) describes this analysis process as "beating eggs together to make an omelette", and advises that it does not merely involve description, but interpretation and explanation. The researcher attempted to make 'rich' descriptions of a phenomena within the village (and not merely statements of fact), and it was this that lay the foundation for analysis (Geertz, 1973; Denzin, 1978). Data analysis spiraled upwards from data, to description, to classifying, to connecting, then finished with a final account (Dey, 1993).

3.3 Conclusion

It is intended that the meaning(s) of development in a rural Chinese village context be identified through ethnographic methods and through a multi-dimensional development framework. The design has been crafted with the understanding that knowledge is acquired through

perceptions/mental structures (reality is constructed and embodied in individuals through life experiences, through the physical world and social interaction). In the end, the outcome will be a single intrinsic village case study in rural China, with six instrumental, embedded households.

The next chapter provides background information to the village. It explains the context of the study, and offers a brief introduction to the six households that participated.

Chapter 4- Overview of the household cases

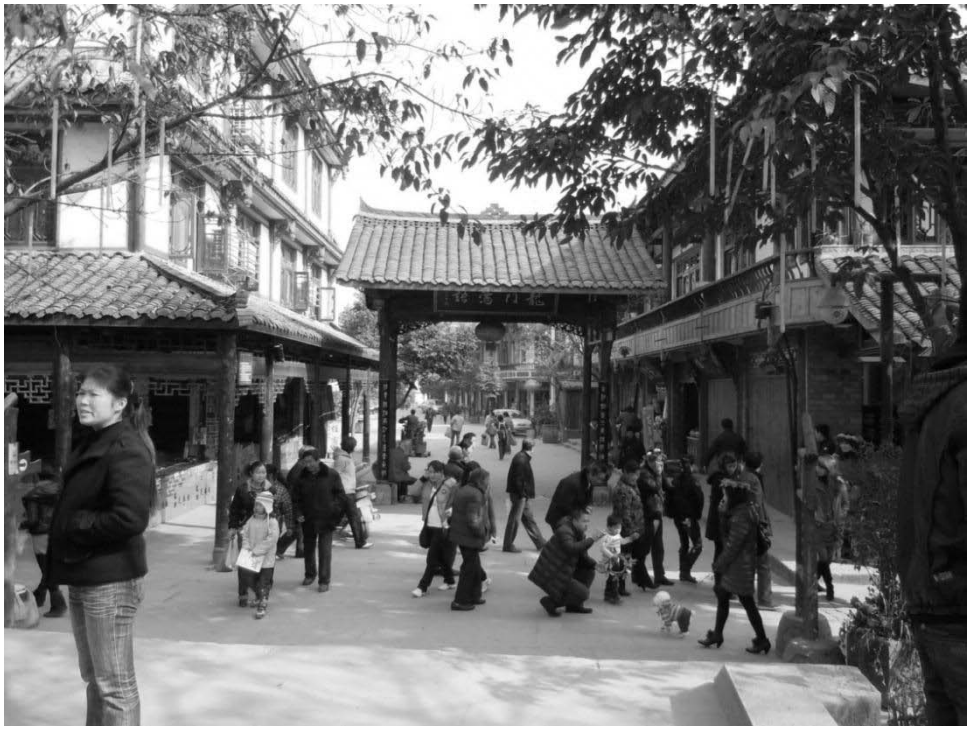
4.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the household case studies. It starts with general village information, sets the context of the study, then provides a brief overview of the households and their values.

4.1.1 Overview of the village

The village chosen for this study was *Tiantang*. *Tiantang* village is located in Sichuan province, Western China. It lies on the outskirts of *Xiguan* city but does not belong to that prefecture. In *Tiantang* there were an estimated eight hundred to a few thousand residents spread out over five square kilometres. The large size of the village was due to an amalgamation of three villages into one a few years ago. This study was of the original village (the second village was a kilometre away, and the other one could not be located). The original village had approximately 300 residents. To the east, the original village was bordered by a river; to the north it was bordered by a street that separated it from *Fugui* County which belonged to *Xiguan* City (this northern border was the street market); to the south it was bordered by a village that belonged to *Fugui* County and *Xiguan* (and to the south of this village was *Munan* Township, connected with *Tiantang* village); and to the west it was bordered by mountains that end the large village farming area. *Tiantang* was on a flat plain but to the east and west were mountainous terrain.

The village's main occupation was farming and there were two main harvest seasons. Another prominent occupation was rickshaw driving. Many younger working-aged residents had chosen to seek employment in larger urban areas. During harvest time these urban migrants returned home to help the elderly with farm work. *Suhe* Township to the north of *Tiantang* village was an 'ancient' tourist town that attracted tourists on weekends and national holiday periods. It sold all kinds of craftwork, served traditional Sichuan cuisine, and provided boat trips down a river that led to *Xiguan* City. It also had a strong tea house culture and Buddhist temple.



Photograph 1 Tourists in *Suhe* ancient town

The *Tiantang* village street market was held every second day (on even days) and every alternate day in *Munan* Township (on odd days). From sunrise to midday the street was a hub of activity, and then villagers returned home for lunch followed by leisure. Items sold in the street market included fruit and vegetables, clothes (hats, shoes, gloves and scarves, jeans, suits), pork/beef/chicken and fish, DVDs and CDs, seeds and nuts, Chinese wine, and toys. There were also several internet cafes, hotels, convenience stores and restaurants. The elderly folk played Mah-jong and cards during the street market, and throughout the afternoon. During the harvest season, villagers used the afternoon for working in the fields instead of recreational activities.

Photograph 2 *Tiantang* village main street (in the afternoon)

4.1.2 Context of the study

The major issue for villagers was an imminent relocation. When and how this would happen remained a matter of contention. The adjacent multimillion dollar ancient tourist town had been a means of tourism revenue for many *Tiantang* villagers for over twenty years, and had a history of farmers' markets going back two hundred years—even though *Tiantang* was not within that jurisdiction. The *Siping* County government wanted to take advantage of the *Suhe* ancient town by creating an ancient village of its own. Officials planned to make 'Ancient liveable town' a town for residential and tourist purposes using the same architecture as *Suhe*, but this plan would potentially result in tourism taking over much of *Tiantang* village, and possibly threaten villagers' livelihoods and security.

In the past, *Siping* County (the county responsible for *Tiantang* village), was wealthier than *Fugui* County based on purely agricultural strength. This situation had slowly been reversed during the reform era. *Siping* County was now referred to as the poor little brother. For some *Tiantang* villagers, the proposed relocation seemed to provide hope, but others perceived it as a reversal of fortune.

The names in the case studies are not real, neither the villagers' names nor the places. It is essential that the village under study not be identified in any way. First, one villager raised the allegation of corruption specifically targeting a local government official, and others concerning local government corruption in general. It is not wise to become involved with these matters as a

researcher. Second, many villagers offered personal information about their lives and families. Accordingly, place names within Sichuan province are not real, and are in italics in this thesis to indicate so. Place names outside Sichuan province are real.

4.1.3 Case study one: The Jiang household

Bai and Ling were the main respondents of this household, a married couple who ran a seed and nut business. This couple, both in their 50s, led a basic life and focused on the business as their main daily activity, but enjoyed time relaxing each afternoon. The couple always agreed to chat, and were warm and friendly on each occasion. In this case there were also elderly parents, who lived in the same dwelling but had a separate life from the son and daughter-in-law. The parents did not add much to the case study but provided background details nevertheless.

For Bai and Ling, trust in the government was considered a very important aspect of their daily lives. They had great confidence in what the government was doing despite not having a basic knowledge about central government policy. Bai talked of vast improvements in the village during the reform era such as food security, transportation, and working conditions. The businessman's pride and joy was an old motor vehicle (in poor condition) that he used for transporting produce to and from the local markets, and from the supply centre in *Xiguan*. This vehicle was crucial for the household's livelihood.

4.1.4 Case study two: The Liu Zhong household

Liu was the main respondent of this household: a 70 year-old widower and father of two adult children. Liu's cousin, Cao Wei, joined the discussion on one occasion and told interesting stories about his life in *Tiantang*. From the outset it was clear that Liu had a strong interest in education. He regularly talked of middle school classmates, and how he desired a good education for his two grandsons.

One interesting feature of this case was a trip to a luxurious housing estate with Liu and Cao. For Liu, this housing estate was central to his view of development. Cao spoke of hardships encountered in *Tiantang* village during the Cultural Revolution and how life since improved.

4.1.5 Case study three: The Sun household

Li, aged 55, was the head and main spokesperson of this household, but his son and daughter-in-law made minor contributions. Li, a wealthy businessman, leased a fruit orchard (mandarins) and was the owner/landlord of four houses in *Tiantang* village's main street. The businessman's main concern was with the proposed relocation plan and whether local officials were negotiating fairly. If the proposed relocation went ahead as Li understood it, he believed his household would go backwards.

Li provided good insight into the way business worked within the village; the relationships required to get business done. The respondent spoke of how life improved in *Tiantang* village since he was young, and the opportunities that had arisen because of the Open Door policy. As a wealthy businessman, Li discussed development as good governance and regulations (policy). Nevertheless, both Li and his son were concerned about corruption from the county level downwards. Li told interesting stories about how *Tiantang* villagers might resolve disputes if they were relocated without fair compensation.

4.1.6 Case study four: The Zhou Zhong household

Zhou, aged 80, retired farmer, was the main respondent of this case, but his wife and only son, the manager of a brick-making factory, also participated. Zhou came from a reasonably wealthy landlord family, so he did not speak positively about the past, but he spoke very animatedly and with confidence about the present and future.

Life in *Tiantang* village for the Zhong family was very basic and simple. They were self-sufficient with daily meals, and content to be surrounded by extended family. Zhou spent most of the day at the front of his home doing craftwork and chatting with passersby. His wife, Hua, 79, was usually doing things outside the home, but when at home she was cooking or looking after grandchildren.

This household had a particular interest in education, and boasted of a granddaughter at a university in Chongqing. The couple was eager to show their granddaughter's calligraphy, and Zhou often boasted of the artwork she had done for his businesses. Zhou regularly discussed the planned village relocation with passion, and had a keen interest in life outside *Tiantang* village.

4.1.7 Case study five: The Huang household

There were three respondents in this case: a couple from Zhejiang province running a bee farming business, and a migrant worker from Yunnan province. The main respondents were business owners. For most of the year Ruixin and Huiming moved from province to province selling honey and royal jelly. Each year in July/August they took a few months' holiday to relax.

The husband, Ruixin, talked often about the business and was eager to find ways to improve it. Ruixin was curious about the possibility of exporting produce to Australia, and discussed other potential markets such as selling from a mobile van. The wife, Huiming, regularly discussed family and the need to do well in business to support her two sons and elderly parents. Although the couple enjoyed the country lifestyle and the freedom associated with individual business ownership, they were tired of this work after having done it for twenty or so years. They wanted to get in to another line of business but believed that a lack of education prevented them.

4.1.8 Other households

Interviews were undertaken in two other households, but with only one discussion in each. It was not possible to secure further discussions within these households because the respondents were not home.

The details of each household were:

Classification	*Age*	*Occupation*	*Background*
Sun Yong (Husband)	57	Cook/ Vegetable Farmer	Lifelong village resident; primary school education; sold vegetables in the nearby town
Liu Jong (Wife)	56	Housewife	Sold small items in their convenience store
Sun and Liu had a son in Hubei (age unknown) and a daughter (nurse) aged 27 in a nearby county			

Classification	*Age*	*Occupation*	*Notes*
Mrs. Ying Zhang (wife)	55	Farmer	Grew vegetables, seeds and peanuts; migrated to village in 1980 after marriage; started learning farming at eight
Mr. Tao *Yuan* (husband)	55	Cemetery worker	
Mr. Jing Zhao (Father of Ying Zhang)	80		
Ying and Tao had an adult son and daughter			

The next six chapters are discussions that took place in six households in *Tiantang* village. Each chapter consists of the household discussions, an analysis of the household case study, and an analysis in relation to the literature review.

Chapter 5 - The Jiang Household

Classification	*Age*	*Occupation*	*Background*
Ming Jiang (Father)	80	Retired farmer, ferryman	Acute Alzheimer's; lifelong village resident; primary school education
Mei Wen (Mother)	79	Housewife	Primary school education; originally from another village
Bai Jiang (Son)	56	Farmer, Businessman (peanuts and sunflower seeds)	Sold sunflower seeds and peanuts in village and township; grew wheat and rice for household; had a 26 year-old son, an interior decorator in the next county, and a daughter, factory worker in another county. He had an eight year-old granddaughter
Ling Hua (Wife)	57	Businesswoman (peanuts and sunflower seeds)	Business partner with husband selling seeds and nuts in the market

5.1 The discussions

5.1.1 Discussion one (D1) – 8 December 2010 from 1.10 pm to 2.50 pm

Introduction

This discussion involved the four household members, but Bai was the main spokesperson. We sat in the household courtyard.

The discussion

At the end of the discussion Bai ranked the six dimensions of development in the order (from the most important to the least important):

1) Economic and cultural
2) Environmental
3) Social
4) Political
5) Spiritual

The six dimensions were discussed as:

Economic development: Bai spoke about economic development in his daily life in the following ways:

> I have more things than in the past…I now have heating, a bigger house, an automobile for taking my goods to the market, pipe water, as well as water for cooking and drinking tea...These days we have meat for every meal whereas in the past this was rare…I am very happy that the government has created many policies to improve village life. For example, it offered compensation to restore housing for earthquake victims, and it abolished taxation…The tourist development in the next county has also been good for my business…Economic development is happening very fast in the area.

“Do you have any examples?” I asked.

> Only three months ago the government had just started the building of a nearby train station. When I passed recently I saw that it had been completed and a train was pulling into the station. This is great because it us now easier to move about, more convenient.

We started the topic of the ancient tourist town in *Fugui* County. Bai said, “The government may compensate me twenty or thirty thousand *yuan* if developers take over the village.” “Is that good or bad?” I asked. Bai hesitated and said, “I am a little concerned that this might not be enough compensation.”

Ming wanted to discuss the *Suhe* ancient tourist town, but the elderly gentleman had Alzheimer’s disease. Post-discussion the translator said that Ming was talking negatively about *Suhe*; that it was important for people to work hard on the land.

Cultural development: Despite ranking cultural development as the most important dimension, Bai said little:

> The government is offering free community education but I have not used it because the classes are for vegetable farmers and I am growing rice and wheat. The training is not relevant for me. The government also has plans for a town library.

He lacked interest in the library plans.

Environmental development: On environmental development Bai said:

> The air quality in the village is good, but I am concerned that with the introduction of new factories into the county this could adversely affect the air quality.

Social development: When first discussing social development Bai was confused with the meaning of ‘social’. After some delay Bai’s spoke of insurance:

> There is currently no insurance in the village... I am jealous of *Fugui* County because they have an insurance system... That county is a part of the *Xiguan* municipal government whereas mine is not. I hope that one day soon my county will become a part of the *Xiguan* municipal government so that my family can have the same benefits. I am optimistic that this will happen in the near future.

As an example of inequality between the counties, Bai said:

> The government provides 50 *yuan* per month for the pension for my father in this village, but in other counties the government provides up to 300 *yuan* per month for aged pensioners. The counties are like brothers, some are poor and some are rich. *Siping* County is the poor brother.

Bai contradicted himself on the issue of relocation compensation. “If my village were to be taken over in the near future my family would be shifted to another area.” “How would you feel about that?” I questioned. “I would be happy because it might mean that my family could move to a better house.”

Political development: On political development, Bai discussed the December 16 village election:

> I do not really care about the election because my vote does not matter or count for much. The leaders from above are the best qualified to determine the best leadership candidates. The nation is like a big family, the elders know who the best ones are to manage/govern the people. The leaders get to know the election candidates from the village meetings.

Bai offered an opinion on the village leader's performance:

> As long as the village leader is doing well I am content, but if the leader is doing a bad job for the village I just ignore the leader. I get on with my own life in spite of the leader. I am currently pleased with what the leader is doing for the village. I do not really concern myself with the politics in the village.

Spiritual development: On spiritual development, Bai said:

> I do not believe in a god. I pay homage to my ancestors at the Spring Festival, but I do this within my own household. There are some Buddhist monks in the town, but the farmers do not really believe in religion.

5.1.2 Discussion two (D2) on 31 December 2010 from 10.00 am to 3.00pm

Introduction

The discussion took place in the household courtyard and kitchen.

The discussion

Although it was difficult to understand Ming, I asked about his life. Ming spoke of his life in the village as follows:

> In the 1980s I left farming to become a ferryman. My job was to transport people and cargo across the nearby river…I only went to middle school. At school students were allowed to study one subject.

Mei returned home and I briefly interviewed her, starting with the topic of her marriage. She said:

> We have been married for sixty years... It was arranged by a go-between. I was sent from the nearby town as a young girl to be raised by the family [in preparation for marriage]. My mother sent me to this village because farm hands were in great demand back then.

I asked Mei to comment on development to which she said, "I do not really know about this topic as I only went to grade four." I explained that everyone has a life story, and that she did not require a high level of education. "I cannot remember the past," Mei quipped. I asked Mei about her working life, whether she worked in her earlier years. Ling interjected and said, "What do you mean 'go to work', she worked on the farm." Mei did not want to talk. I noticed her disposition was different from the last discussion: she was upset and continually frowned, particularly in the presence of the daughter-in-law.

The translator explained there was tension between the elderly parents and son (and wife) over inheritance and other matters. The elderly couple wanted to leave property to the eldest son. I ended the discussion with Mei and waited for Bai to return.

We ate lunch in a dimly lit kitchen. Bai raised the topic of relocation compensation: "Each couple will get 35 square metres in the newly built houses." When the elderly parents left the table, Bai and Ling talked about the afterlife. Bai said: "My parents want to be buried when they die, but I want them to have a cremation when they die. The government is offering incentives for cremation as it takes up less space."

“What do you think will happen after you die? Do you believe there is an afterlife?” I asked. “I do not believe in an afterlife [laughing]. Ghosts are just in the movies on television. I hope that when you die you will not come back to haunt me [grinning].” I returned the joke with, “We are good friends; I would not do that.”

As good rapport had been established, I asked more direct questions on development. “Could you tell me what political development means to you and what kinds of topics relate to it?” Bai sighed and replied: “I am poorly educated and not qualified to talk about things of a higher nature. I am concerned about matters of my farming business whereas you university-educated people deal with things on a higher level”.

I asked Bai, “Have you ever heard about the large-scale riots in *Meihuan* prefecture in 1993?” “I did not hear about it. China is now moving towards a time of great peace whereby people will not only look after their family members, but also outsiders, including other nations,” he explained.

Bai spoke on development in terms of the material things acquired, and how work life had changed. “My working life has changed over the years. I used to have to shovel the duck shit for fertiliser, but now the farmers just buy the fertiliser.” Bai also spoke fondly of his motor vehicle, which was used for transporting goods two hundred metres to the street market. It looked very old, and Bai explained that over the previous two months it required maintenance. It was still not working properly.

During lunch I also asked, “Would you like to have gone to university if given the opportunity?” “I am too old now to think of that. My education is now learning how to do my business better each day. I must follow the way the leaders are moving”. Bai offered some advice by saying that each person must follow their ability and interests, and do their work well. Addressing the translator Bai said, “If you were to try to do my job you would find it difficult as it does not suit your interests and ability, just as if I were to try your work, I would also fail”.

Bai talked about his mobile phone: “It has twenty-four functions but I don’t know how to use all of them”. “What does the mobile phone mean for your daily life,” I asked. “It enables me to do sales more quickly. It has helped me improve my business”.

Photograph 3 Bai's motor vehicle

I attempted to have Bai take five photographs on the topic of development in the village. “Can you take photographs of what represents development in your village?” I requested. It proved to be difficult task to achieve. “There is no development in the village, so I cannot take any photographs,” Bai suggested. I tried a second time, but Bai replied, “Come back in a year and I can take many photos.” “But I am interested in what you see as development today,” I explained. Bai gave the real reason for refusal: “I do not want to be seen in the village taking photos with a foreigner.” Eager for some images on development, I asked, “Would you then take some photos around your house that represent development?” He still refused. In the end, Bai selected some images around the home and I took the photographs.

Images that Bai selected were: the fridge, water pump, gas appliance, the gas stove, and the motor vehicle.

5.1.3 Discussion three (D3) on 12 February 2011 from 12.00am to 3.00pm

Introduction

I went to the *Munan* Township market to begin this discussion, and it continued later in the Jiang home.

The discussion

I started by asking Bai about his business. Bai said:

> I started the business about 20 years ago with the help of my cousin. When I first started I had very limited stock, but over the years my range of seed and nut produce has expanded so now I can earn more money. We

> start work in the market at 7 am each day and finish at midday. We work between the street market near *Suhe* Township and the market in *Munan* Township on alternate days and we do not have any days off.

I asked Bai whether he and his wife would have a holiday for the Chinese New Year and he said: "I cannot [have a holiday for Chinese New Year] because this is the busiest time of the year." "Will you have a holiday break after the new year holiday period" I asked. "No. Travelling is for rich people but we are too poor".

Getting straight the point, I enquired, "What is development to you?" At first Bai found this quite difficult to answer. In fact, he seemed slightly annoyed about the question: "This is a topic for educated people in the government [sigh]. Development is outside of my knowledge. I am poor and uneducated and therefore cannot speak about development."

"Does development have anything to do with happiness?" I continued. "I'd agree with that," Ling said. We talked about what that meant. "Happiness is about doing much better than before," Bai suggested—"During the Mao years, people found it very difficult just to find food or to have clothing". "In the past many people starved to death, but now we do not need to worry about whether we can eat or whether we will have clothes to wear", he added. Bai continued:

> In the past the people had to work all day long for very little reward. Nowadays we can work whenever we want. I do not need to work too hard and yet I can still have plenty to eat every day. I have plenty to wear and plenty to drink. I work each day from 7 am to 12 pm then I have the afternoon to relax.

"Does the government help your business in any way?" I asked. Bai replied, "I do not get too involved with politics. I just focus on doing my business every day." "Has the *Suhe* tourist town helped your business in anyway?" I followed. Bai said:

> It has not really helped at all because I am not allowed to do any business in the tourist centre. If I do business in the tourist centre I will get punished. The expansion of the *Suhe* tourist centre over the past two decades has not helped my business.

The discussion shifted onto the topic of the village cemetery. "How important is the cemetery for you?" I proposed. "The cemetery is very good for the village because each villager can get 400 *yuan* payment each year," Bai said. He explained how this works: "The families pay a lump sum to secure a space at the cemetery, and then pay an annual caretaking fee of twenty *yuan*." Bai and Ling next raised the topic of the aged pension. Ling said, "I get the pension because women get it at fifty years of age, but my husband needs to wait until he is sixty."

The conversation moved to education. The couple spoke about their children's education. "They both went to middle school but did not perform well, so they dropped out and started work", Ling commented. Bai said, "My son works as in interior designer and my daughter works in a box factory." "Can you receive any free education for your type of business," I enquired. Bai said:

> Doing business is like study. You have to learn by yourself. If you want to be a university student you must first pass the entrance exam. If you can't pass the exam you should give up and do something else…As a businessman you need to be tolerant and enduring. If the customer argues with you, you need to listen to them and do not argue back.

I asked whether there were any famous people from the village and whether this was important. Ling said, “There is a man who is doing post-doctoral research, but I do not know where he is now.” Bai added, “He is probably doing some research around China.”

During the afternoon Bai also discussed the location of the village:

> The village location is very close to the markets and *Xiguan*. Both the street market near the tourist town and the market in the local township are very close, and *Xiguan* is not too far away to collect the seeds and nuts... I cannot drive my vehicle past the third ring road in *Xiguan* because it is illegal for my type of vehicle... My transportation is very good [meaning the motorcar he uses to carry his goods]. I travel to *Xiguan* to replenish my stock whenever it gets low.

I tested the topic of the village’s environment, whether it helped in any way. Bai said:

> There is clear air in the village. Although there is a cement and chemical fertilizer factory in the county they are far away. When *Xiguan* City expands to the fifth ring road, these factories will be asked to move.

I mentioned to Bai that I had heard about the county’s reputation for the longevity of its people. “Why is that so?” I asked. “It is probably the fresh air and water. The people who live in the mountains can live for a long time”, Bai informed.

Towards the end of the discussion, the conversation shifted to my motive for visiting the village. Bai was suspicious as to why I was coming to the village, but he was not aggressive. “I think you are here to do research on the environment for business purposes,” Bai proposed [smirking]. I tried to assure Bai that I was purely interested in learning about life in an average Chinese village and that talking with him was very valuable part of this. “If I do not come to your village, how can people really understand what life is really like in a Chinese village?” I asserted. Bai responded, “Perhaps you could bring some Australian native fruits or vegetables to China to grow and sell to Chinese people.” I thought I had convinced Bai that I was there as a student.

I tested some ideas discussed with villagers in two neighbouring villages. On military development Bai said: “It is very important but it is not a matter for me because I am an ordinary farmer. It is just to defend the country; to do some drills but it is not about real war. The current theme of the world is peace.” “What is harmonious society all about for you then,” I prompted. [Gesturing towards me, Bai said:] “It’s about people of different nationalities coming together to make friends.”

“With the rapid modernisation of China, are you concerned that traditional values might be lost or eroded?” I asked. “Traditional values will last forever. I do not worry about that,” Bai said. “What are traditional values?” I probed. “Paying respect to elders and leaders and taking care of the young,” the respondent answered. Bai added, “Even the tiger knows how to take care of its cubs”.

To conclude, I asked Bai and Ling whether there were any improvements for women in the village over the years (I asked this because Ling had not contributed to the discussion). Ling said, “Nothing much has changed. It’s still the same.” Bai disagreed, and commented, “Women do not

need to shape their fate anymore. Men and women are equal now." I asked about the roles of men and women in marriage. Ling said, "The husband and wife should work out the solution to problems together".

5.1.4 Discussion four (D4) on 22 March 2011 between 2.15pm and 3.00pm

Introduction

This discussion took place in the household kitchen.

The discussion

I began the discussion by re-establishing the purpose of the visit: "I am hoping that we can spend about an hour as a follow up to our previous discussion about development." Bai smiled and said, "I think you are here to talk about development so that you can do some investment." I replied, "I am here to learn about development in this village so that when I return to Australia I can tell people about what life is like in a Chinese village. I really am a student." "I don't believe," Bai said, enjoying the banter, adding, "Development is happening near the area really fast. The other day I went to *Qinghong* to pick up some beans for my brother-in-law and was surprised to see the new changes at the station."

"When I last spoke with your father he said he could only learn one subject at school. What did you learn?" I began. Bai explained that there was really no schooling when he was young due to the Cultural Revolution, but said, "I only have two keen eyes. I am capable of learning whatever I do."

"You also spoke about homage to your ancestors. Why do you do that?" I continued. Bai's answered, "Sichuan people are very sly. Some believe in paying homage, but others don't. It is just a tradition or legend."

"You also commented that your business has expanded in product range over the past twenty years. What is the major factor for this?" I asked. "It is because of the competition in the industry. If others are increasing you increase too," Bai explained.

"What about the relocation. Is there any news about that?" I asked. Bai indirectly answered this question by saying that people are getting 600 *yuan* per month. I asked Bai whether he was receiving this too. He explained that the starting age for the pension was 60 for men, and that he was not old enough. "Will you get a good deal?" I said, referring to the relocation. Bai thought I was still talking about the 600 *yuan* per month arrangement and replied, "It is good for my generation, but not for the next generation." "No, I mean is the relocation to another area going to be a good deal?" I pressed. "It all depends upon when your house was built. If you house was built in the 50s or 60s like many villagers it is a good deal. My house is twenty years old and had

renovations after the earthquake, so I am not sure whether the newly built houses will be of good quality or not."

"In the last discussion you said that development is about happiness. What do you mean by happiness?" I continued. Bai's response followed on from his previous statement, "It is hard to say. They are just implementing the plans [indicating that the new houses have not yet been built]."

I asked the question in a different way, "You previously ranked economics and cultural development as the most important dimensions of development. How does this relate to happiness?" Bai gave an exasperated sigh, as if to suggest he was not qualified to talk about development, and said, "For people like me, we did not receive a good education. Without a good education your brain ceases to function. If people in China become educated then we all can develop."

Bai made a comparison between his father's life in the village and his own. Ling started this discussion by enthusiastically saying, "Our life is much better than our parents." Bai took over and said, "All our parents asked for was enough to eat and for some warm clothes to wear. We do not need to worry about these things any more. I also do not need to carry goods using manual labour. I have a motor vehicle to do that."

"Could you please rank your village on a scale of zero to ten, where zero is underdevelopment and ten is advanced development?" I continued. Bai answered as follows:

> It depends on the period. When the PRC was first established many people starved, so I would give that period a one. For the Cultural Revolution I would give a three because there were still many hardships at that time. For example, you couldn't go to school. For the time when the Household Responsibility System was introduced I would give an eight, because it gave many people new opportunities. I would give the present time a ten.

"Are you angry that you could not get an education?" I enquired. "I have forgotten about that. What has passed has passed. You cannot be bitter or jealous. You just strive to improve yourself," the businessman responded.

"I'm curious as to why you would not take photographs of development in the village in our second discussion," I put to the respondent. "That is because there is no development here yet," Bai replied. "But you just ranked the village a ten for development, yet you say there is no development here," I quizzed. "I gave the village a ten because compared to the past it is much better," the respondent explained. He added, "I haven't been outside this area for a long time, but when I went to *Qinghong* recently I could see that development is happening fast. There is now a bridge near the railway at *Qinghong*. It wasn't there not so long ago."

"What is your hope for the future?" I asked. Bai replied, "I cannot see right now. Life is getting better. With my level of knowledge I cannot predict the future." "But hope is about your

aspirations and dreams," I prompted. "The kind of development depends upon the officials' decisions. The Sichuan government will look to the central government's decisions and the central government looks at foreign ideas when making decisions."

The conversation turned to Bai's motor vehicle. I asked whether he would purchase a better car, to enable him to go past *Xiguan*'s third ring road. "I could go past the third ring road in the past but now it is banned," Bai explained. "Can you get a loan for a new car?" I said, thinking that the main problem might be the vehicle's road worthiness. "I don't need a loan for a car. I am too old to get my driver's license. My type of car does not need a driver's license," the respondent replied. He joked that in five years people will be flying helicopters and that cars will become useless. "What do you save you money for then?" I asked. "*Hongbao! Hongbao!* [meaning: 'red envelope' used for giving monetary gifts]," the respondent exclaimed—"I give money to support my children. "You foreigners must have a lot of money," Bai said, and I then realized he did not have a saving plan.

This led into humorous banter about why I had come to the village. "I think that you are employed by the central government to learn from the villagers about their ideas about development," Bai began with a smirk. The translator and I erupted with laughter; Bai joined the chorus. "Why would the central government employ me, a foreigner, without basic Chinese language skills?" I protested. Bai gave his rationale as follows:

> The first time you came here there was no talk about relocation. The second time you came here there was growing rumours about the relocation. By the third time you visited people were talking about getting insurance. The fourth time you came here the land had been sold and people were receiving their insurance.

Nothing I said would change Bai's mind, so I left that topic and asked, "Do you know when and where you will be moving?" "It will take another year for the new houses to be built. We will move to the hill area near the cemetery," Bai answered.

Testing another menu item, I asked, "Did you hear about the twelfth five-year plan?" Bai said he had not heard about it. "It's about the government's economic plan for the next five years," I explained. He did not seem interested, but responded, "The high officials take care of the ordinary people, and we do not worry about the details of the plan."

I thanked Bai for his time and asked whether I could purchase some nuts. He led me into the storage room and measured one *jin* (.5 kg) of nuts. As Bai weighed the peanuts, I asked Ling (who had followed to farewell the guests) whether inflation had affected the business, and whether they would put prices up. She said, "I am worried that customers will go away if we put the prices up." Bai added, "It is a free market. The price is based on the market price. We sell in relation to what price the suppliers offer and hope to make a profit." "How much?" I asked, as Bai handed me a bag of nuts. "7.5 *yuan*" he said, but then offered them for free. We haggled over this for a while. I gave Ling the money and left.

5.2 Case analysis

The household explicitly identified development as 'happiness' and this had a strong connection with food security and other basic needs. Another feature of this case is that economics was ranked as the most important dimension of development, and was discussed from a historical perspective. Spatially, the household discussed development in the sphere of household interests more so than the wider village.

The next section provides a brief analysis of the Jiang household discussions. It identifies the themes within the discussions.

5.2.1 Themes of development

Sphere of development	*Theme of development*
Personal/family	Basic needs and household items (gas, pump water, food, gas stove, fridge, mobile phone, motor vehicle) Business Social security Education (social capital) Infrastructure
Village/Local Government	Fairness and justice ('relocation of villagers', elections) Local economy and tourism (business opportunities
Nation	Central government's leadership (trust)

Basic needs and household items:

It is evident that basic needs with an emphasis on food, clothing, housing and transportation was important in this household. Economic development (rated at number one) was discussed regarding improvements in "heating, a bigger house, an automobile…pipe water…water for cooking and drinking tea". When asked to take photographs on images that represented development in daily life, images chosen included pictures of a fridge, water pump, gas appliance, gas stove, and motor vehicle (used for transporting produce). In addition, a mobile phone had enhanced business sales despite a lack of knowledge of how to use it. Basic needs were discussed as not worrying about eating (twice), drinking (once) and clothing (twice) today (D3). This pattern appeared again in discussion four when a comparison was made with the elderly parents' generation (it was not a problem to find food to eat, clothes to wear, and it was not burdensome to carrying goods—"I have a motor vehicle to do that"—than in the past). The theme of food and clothing, raised during every discussion, was an important area of development in the Jiang household. It is interesting that freedom from worry was continually emphasised as these items were discussed.

Business:

Expansion of a peanut and sunflower business was crucial in this household. The individual

business owners did not take holidays and were engaged with business most of the time, alternating mornings between the village and township markets and regularly travelling to *Xiguan* to replenish stock.

It is interesting that education was raised in connection with business in discussion two (because the business owner missed the opportunity for a good education, the business was viewed as means to learning life skills and gaining knowledge). Development was a topic for people of higher education, but the respondent's ideas of personal and family development were very business-centric: "I am too old to think of that [education]. My education is now learning how to do business better each day" (D2); and, "Doing business is like study. You have to learn by yourself. If you want to be a university student you must first pass the entrance exam. If you can't pass the entrance exam you must give up and do something else" (D3).

Business expansion was linked with other factors. The motor vehicle played a significant part. Without this vehicle the household could not have transported as many goods to the market or acquire stock from *Xiguan*. Stock expansion was attributed to the growth of the industry, and China's economic growth, rather than personal entrepreneurship, and this was why the businessman placed strong trust in leadership (D4). Nevertheless, the respondent believed that with a right attitude and values the business could run effectively: It was explained that to be a businessman one must be "tolerant and enduring" (D3). Growth of the *Suhe* ancient tourist town was not a major factor for the businessman's success because of government restrictions placed on *Tiantang* villagers doing business there (D3).

Social security:

Pension payment was considered to be an important policy in this household, even though the respondent was not yet eligible. The 600 *yuan* aged pension offered in compensation for the sale of land was regularly discussed, and the issue of the elderly father's low pension payment in comparison to other counties was raised.

Education:

Education was connected with development in this household despite its claims of a low education background. It was not merely about a qualification though. Despite a missed opportunity for a higher education, the businessman desired knowledge in the ways of the seed and nut business: "I only have two keen eyes. I am capable of learning whatever I do" (D4). In the context of China's development, education was vital: "For people like me, we did not receive a good education. Without a good education your brain ceases to function. If people in China become educated then we all can develop" (D4).

Infrastructure:

Infrastructure was discussed in association with improved business opportunities. The rapid improvements to the nearby railway station were of particular interest, because it meant greater mobility: “it is great because it is easier to move around” (D1). Better road infrastructure was also perceived as potentially having a greater impact on the local economy (D3). In particular, the businessman held the hope that his business would improve (easier transportation of goods) because the fifth ring road was coming closer to the area (D2). Moreover, without the existing road infrastructure, the respondent’s business efficiency would have been significantly lower. Infrastructure was important for this household because it meant easier access to suppliers and markets.

Fairness and justice:

This case revealed a theme of fairness and justice in relation to the village relocation plans and the village election. On the relocation plans, the household was initially worried over the possible unfairness of the relocation, but as discussions progressed it became more confident about proper compensation. It held a cautious wait-and-see approach on this issue. It is interesting that this household was not fully informed about the village relocation plans, but trusted for a reasonable outcome because the house was rather old. On the elections, the household did not care much for village politics, instead entrusting its future to the ‘parent’ government. Within this household was a strong filial piety toward local government; that it would act in the household’s best interests: “Even a tiger knows how to look after its cubs”.

Local economy and tourism:

The *Suhe* ancient tourist town was regularly discussed as a theme, but there were mixed emotions about its value. It was considered as good for business in discussion one (but no details were given), but in later discussions it was discussed as not really helpful because *Tiantang* villagers were not permitted to do business there. *Suhe* ancient town appeared to be symbolic of China’s development, but because it had no direct personal benefit, it was not really discussed as though it was important.

Central government’s leadership:

This household trusted the leadership of the central government: “I follow the way that the leaders are moving”. A metaphor of family was used to describe the relationship between leaders and followers in China, like a parent-child relationship (D1 and D2). Central government policy was indirectly discussed with topics such as ‘harmonious society’ (with the assertion that China was moving towards a time of great peace), but discussed in a traditional sense and not as the

Scientific Development Concept (D2). When asked about the central government's twelfth five-year plan, the household head said: "The high officials take care of the ordinary people; we do not worry about the details of the plan." Development for this household was to do with filial piety toward the leaders, to trust leaders to look after common villagers. This household knew its place in the societal order, to trust and not to cross the line into higher government matters.

5.2.2 Historical perspective

This case revealed a historical perspective based on basic needs and business. It was interesting that when the main respondent ranked the quality of development in *Tiantang* village on a scale of one to ten, did so from a longitudinal perspective rather than solely on present-day conditions. Table 3 lists the issues discussed from a historical perspective.

Past	*Present*
Smaller house	Bigger house
No transportation	Automobile for transporting goods
Well water (carried by manual labour)	Pipe water for cooking and drinking tea
Rare to eat meat	Meat for every meal
Shovelling duck 'shit' for fertiliser	Purchase fertiliser
Limited stock for business	Large variety of produce
Difficult to find food and clothing (starvation to death)	Do not need to worry about eating or clothing
Had to work hard all day long for little reward	Nowadays work whenever we want and do not need to work too hard (and have plenty of food and drink)
Inequality between men and women	Women do not need to shape their fate anymore
Instability and fighting	Moving towards a time of great peace

Table 3 Historical perspectives in the Jiang household

Development was not widely perceived in this household from a historical perspective, but respondents understood it as taking place in their daily lives in several key areas, mainly food, shelter, clothing and business needs (motor vehicle). As the household story revealed a harsh life in *Tiantang* village under Mao, the smallest of basic needs improvements were the major emphasis of development today. The household was very satisfied with life as long as basic needs were being met. Any development above basic needs appeared to be a bonus, but the couple was in their mid to late fifties and had no aspirations beyond advancing the small business and ensuring that their children were doing well. Improvement in the lives of women, and harmony in society in general, were discussed longitudinally (but Ling believed that life for women had not improved over the years). Behind the stories of historical development were the feelings of relief and gratefulness for the freedom (or lack of worry) experienced by having basic needs met in the contemporary village.

5.2.3 Spatial perspective

Outside comparisons were not made by this household because it rarely travelled outside the local township/village area. The only comparison made was with the wealth of *Fugui* County. *Fugui* County was referred to as the wealthy big brother, and *Siping* County as the poor little brother. Holiday travel was the only other comparison identified in the case, whereby it was considered that only the rich could travel but the poor could not. Other than these comparisons, the household seemed rather content with what they had and with life in general.

5.3 Analysis in relation to the literature review

5.3.1 Western themes of development

This study suggests that Western ideals of development were not influential. The only reference to Western aspects of development was when the household head noted that the central government makes its policy based on what is useful about Western ideas. Western historical impacts in the area were not evident: local development was attributed to the work of the Chinese government rather than any specific influences from Western culture.

5.3.2 Themes of Chinese development

In this household, there was no religious belief or high level education so the concept of traditional values as forming a part of contemporary development ideas was not apparent. During Spring Festival, the household paid homage to ancestors but this ritual did not hold any real significance or meaning. Ancestral worship was held with suspicion, and it was believed that Sichuan people could be religiously sly. It was also claimed that the village farmers were not religious. Traditional values may have been implicit in the stories nevertheless. This was particularly evident in the regular usage of the family metaphors, a very Confucian way of looking at the world. It was used when talking about government, both local and central, and when comparing counties. Filial piety, a Confucian value, was very prominent in the way that this household carried out its daily tasks. For this household, the State was like a parent who had the responsibility of taking care of its children.

There was no interest in politics, so ideologies were not discussed. Communism was not directly raised, but the hardships of the Mao era were contrasted with significant improvements made under Deng Xiaoping. The Household Responsibility System was considered to be a turning point in the village. Rapid growth in China's economy was given as the reason behind the benefits flowing through to the business and household. With the perception of a growing economy, it was suggested that China was moving toward harmonious society; a time of great peace (another Confucian concept).

5.3.4 Themes of development in Chinese village life

Economic:

This household identified basic needs and material items as representing development. For the most part, economics was discussed in terms of better food, housing and clothing; and in relation to business, an expanding seed and nut industry and a motor vehicle to transport goods. The household's livelihood was intrinsically connected to how well the industry was fairing, so economics was about day to day prospects in that industry as well as access to markets.

Cultural:

Culture was considered as something that professionals and government officials had, and therefore the household was happy to follow their lead. However, on a daily basis, being educated with skills and knowledge for the seed and nut businessman was important for development. Culture was not discussed as events taking place in the village on a daily basis, and was also not connected with Chinese tradition (e.g. Spring Festival). It was important for more Chinese to be educated so that "we can develop" and this concept was about culture driving economic development. Cultural development was connected with education and leaders, and seemed to be what underpinned economic development for this case.

Environmental:

Environmental development was rarely discussed in this case, yet it was ranked as the third most important dimension. The environment was mentioned in terms of air quality, with the respondent indicating that polluting factories should not be part of village life.

Social:

In this case, social development was associated with harmony, and discussed in terms of household wellbeing over recent years. The respondent saw a golden age when everyone would be economically better off with fewer problems in society. Increased government payments (pension and cemetery revenue) were some of the ways that this harmony was occurring. The household's improved business prospects were another. Its harmony concept extended to foreigners and was related to hosting a foreign guest to lunch. Social development had a close link with harmony and economic wellbeing.

Political:

This household had no interest in village politics or policy matters from the central government, but placed much trust in the modern-day officials to govern the land.

Spiritual:

This household did not believe in religion or acknowledge a spiritual aspect to development. When spiritual matters were raised, it joked about it as something for the movies, and it was quite sceptical about the genuineness of Sichuan people practicing ancestral worship (despite practicing it).

5.4 Conclusion

The main themes of development in this household were basic needs and trust. There was a simple formula behind these two discussion points: as long as the household was doing well, it could trust the government. Another strong theme was freedom from the harsh times of the past. This case study also suggests that there was a class order within the village. The participants held a low position in the national and village order, so they understood it was not wise to speak on higher policy matters. A clear distinction was made between the local level government officials (the people that do development), and the common village (the ones that obeyed instructions). Another observation from the case is that the village may not be a closely knit community: this household appeared to keep to themselves.

Chapter 6 - The Sun Household

Classification	*Age*	*Occupation*	*Notes*
Li Sun (husband)	55	Fruit grower (Mandarins)	Lifelong village resident; middle school education
Guofeng Gao (wife)	53	Convenience store business	Middle school education; ran a Mah-jong business
Zhuang Sun (Son)	33	Postgraduate student in *Yaxi* (Agriculture)	Postgraduate student at an agricultural university in *Yaxi*
Zong Jinli (daughter-in-law)	30	Housewife	Looked after one-year old daughter; college graduate in accounting

6.1 The discussions

6.1.1 Discussion one (D1) on 14 December 2010 from 1.45pm to 3.15pm

Introduction

This discussion began on the road to the respondent's fruit orchard. It later took place amongst thick foliage at the orchard hilltop.

The discussion

Li had a friendly disposition: very talkative and pleased to share time and stories. He spoke of the various aspects of development as follows:

Political development: Li ranked political development as the most important dimensional aspect because it enabled people to achieve more things. It was good for business. However, when discussing the December 18 village election, Li said:

> It is not important for me because it is not conducted fairly. The candidates are selected by the county officials. Each candidate pays money to the villagers to vote for them prior to the election.

The conversation turned to the topic of the village's Party Secretary (who is on the village committee but not the leader). Li spoke about the Party Secretary as follows:

> The Party Secretary is a very wealthy man. He is worth about 100 million *yuan* [$15 million in Australian currency] who has many mistresses and ten children... The Party Secretary visits the provincial government, along with the village leader, each year to pay money, to bribe the officials to keep his position safe… The village leader used to be in the military.

The discussion on continued on village governance, particularly the Party Secretary. Li said:

> The Party Secretary pays for dinner for all the villagers three times a year [he said there were 5,000 villagers], and for these dinners he pays the over 60s a 200 *yuan* bonus. The poorer households can get items such as towels and laundry powder from the secretary; and the secretary will even pay housing construction costs for poorer families. He also makes a gift of 400 *yuan* for each family at festival time. When the secretary and the village leader retire they will get 150,000 per year.

Economic development: On economic development, Li discussed the *Suhe* ancient town:

> I do not believe that the relocation of the village is a good move because the compensation will not be enough. I will only be compensated at less than 600 *yuan* per square metre.

On the fruit growing business, Li said: "I sell my fruit to Hebei province and Russia, so the plan to develop tourism in the area does not really have any impact on my business."

Li contrasted economic development in the Mao era with the modern China in relation to his life. He said:

> I was lucky that my family did not starve to death [he seemed to be referring to the Great Leap Forward here]. My family only earned 200 *yuan* per year [AUD30 in today's currency], but many other families were worse off with a daily wage of just .009 *jiao* [1 *jiao* is .10 of a *yuan*]… Many villagers during the Mao era could not earn enough to eat. "Pigs today eat better than we did back then... Life has been so much better after Deng Xiaoping introduced new policies…life has become so much easier.

"In what way?" I pressed.

> My family now has many home appliances and a bigger house…After we got over the period of starvation, the Cultural Revolution encroached on the village…I was only able to go to middle school.

The respondent made this statement with a slight tone of disappointment.

I asked Li how he became successful in business. He answered:

> I won a tender for the leases of this land…I only pay 1,000 *yuan* per year for the lease. In the past I was required to pay taxation of 10,000 per year but taxation has now been removed, so I do not pay tax [he added with a grin].

Cultural development: On the topic of cultural development the respondent initially discussed agricultural studies at middle school:

> I paid three *yuan* per term but the teachers didn't really care about the student's education. In the Mao era I can remember my classmates being taught to criticise anyone who was rich. Rich students were taken to the front of the classroom to be criticised by the other students. ["Any examples?" I asked]: If a family had chickens at their house they could use them for anything except to sell in the market.

The discussion stayed on education:

> I was asked to go to Chongqing to visit the head of the national research institute for agriculture to learn about growing fruit. I got free accommodation, meals, and 100 *yuan* per day.

Environmental development: On environmental development, Li Sun said:

> The environment in the village is good…As China develops it is expected that pollution will get worse... There are very few factories near the village so air pollution is not a major problem for my fruit growing business…The bamboo trees do not grow as tall as they once used to.

On the environment, Li also mentioned there were many famous people buried in the cemetery behind the orchard. "The cemetery was built by the government; you need to pay 600,000 *yuan* to reserve a space," Li said, with the suggestion that this was important for social status.

Social development: The respondent did not know how to discuss social development at first, but started on social activities after I asked what villagers do in their spare time. He said: "The government organizes many social activities such as dancing and singing [not karaoke]…The people can enjoy drinking tea and eating snacks paid for by the government."

Li talked about his son's marriage, which was closer to social development. He commented: "My daughter-in-law's parents [from *Mujiang*] did not want her to marry too far away from home, but the marriage went ahead and everything worked out well."

Spiritual development: Li ranked spiritual development as the least important aspect of development. On spiritual development, he said:

> I do not have a religion... Under Mao religion was pushed underground, but nowadays people in the village have the freedom to practice their religion of choice…It is the older people in the village who tend to have a religion because they had had a taste of it before Mao rose to power... The young people today do not believe in any religion…They would rather listen to music: The elders like religious rituals whereas the younger generation likes bands.

Li ranked the various aspects of development at the end of the discussion as:

1) Political
2) Economic
3) Cultural
4) Environmental
5) Social
6) Spiritual

6.1.2 Discussion two (D2) on 6 January 2011 from 12.00pm to 2.45pm

Introduction

This discussion began in the street market, shifted to the household dining room, and ended at the fruit orchard. In the street market Li's neighbour/tenant advised that Li owned four two-storey houses in the main street.

The discussion

During lunch I spoke with Li's daughter-in-law, Zong. She explained her household role:

> I look after my daughter, do the cooking, and wash the clothes. [The meal had been cooked by her under the supervision of her grandmother-in-law]…I am not a very good cook… [everyone present agreeing that it was very tasty]…I am from *Mujiang* but I regularly return home to visit my mother…It is about a three hour trip…My father died when I was young so my mother worked on a farm for many years…My mother then became a factory worker after a factory was built near the village. At that time many farm workers became factory workers... [Regarding her career;] When my daughter is older I would like to find some work in *Xiguan*. [I asked her whether that would be easy]...It will not be a problem as I already have some experience. Many businesses in *Xiguan* are always looking for accountants.

During lunch a beggar entered Li's house asking for money, so he offered a place at the table. The woman declined. Li gave some money. Then several young women came down the stairs and picked at some food on their way to a minivan parked across the road.

After lunch I walked with Li to the orchard for the discussion. Li said:

> [Li mentioned with a straight face that the girls who came through the house and into the van during lunch were prostitutes]. They rent rooms in the upper levels of my house…During holiday time, such as the national

holiday there are hundreds of prostitutes in the village. The Party Secretary's house was a karaoke/brothel up until last week when it was knocked down to make way for the *Suhe* ancient tourist town expansion. It has been knocked down as an example of the development to come. It is a way of taking the lead or stating to the villagers that the development has begun.

I handed Li my camera and asked if he could take five photographs on development in the village, or in his daily life. The respondent was hesitant and returned the camera. The conversation went as follows:

Li: I cannot take any photos because development has not yet arrived.

Researcher: Can I take pictures of what you deem to be development in your daily life?

Li: Ok. [Pointing to the wide open spaces of farmland] You can take a photograph of that.

Researcher: How does that image represents development?

Li: All of this farmland will be converted into parkland. There will also be residential mansions for the rich… The land will be purchased by a Shanghai real estate company. [We continued toward the fruit orchard]…The river bank is also being built up; the rocks used for this will cost 2000 *yuan* per ton [suggesting that this also is an example of development].

At the orchard gate the respondent pointed to a small cluster of buildings and said: "You can also take a photograph of that." "How does that relate to development?" I asked. Li answered, "They look beautiful".

Photograph 4 Beautiful buildings in *Fugui* County (orchard on left)

I asked Li how the development would affect him:

I will not get a fair deal because I now have 600 square metres in my four houses, but the compensation at the

new residential apartments will be paid at the rate of 35 square metres per person.

[When discussing this Li did not show any bitterness; it was as though he had resigned himself to this outcome]

Most of the villagers will get a fair deal from the relocation as their buildings are old and they have less property.

The topic shifted to Li's fruit business:

It was not a good year last year because of the snow in late December. Before the snowfall some business people in other provinces were offering to buy my fruit at 8.5 *jiao* per *jin* [half a kilogram] but I rejected this price. In the street market today I was selling the fruit at 6 *jiao* per *jin*. Now is a difficult time to sell because the quality of the produce has gotten worse and the demand has slowed.

As we ascended the orchard hill the conversation continued:

Li: I am picking fruit this afternoon for my wife to sell in the township tomorrow.

Researcher: Is development just about buildings and money?

Li: Yes.

[We stopped at the hilltop near a cabin and Li prepared baskets and tools for cutting branches. Li remarked that he made the cabin with his own skills.]

Researcher: What have your increased income, business success and property assets meant for you? How have these things changed your life?

[Note: There is no private property ownership in China; there is usually a lease for 70 years.]

Li: I have been able to support my son's education…Although he [Li's son] is on a scholarship, it really isn't enough. My extra support can help him to study well.

Researcher: How would you have felt if your son had not been given the opportunity to study?

Li: This would have made life very difficult for him. With an education my son can become independent: he doesn't have to borrow money from his relatives.

Researcher: What does your increasing income do for you?

Li: My income enables me to have financial security. If I was not able to continue in this business I would have enough money to start something else.

Researcher: What other things could you do?

Li: I am too old. I would look after my granddaughter.

I offered Li help with the fruit picking in an attempt to make the conversation flow naturally, and to avoid wasting his working time. He did not mind chatting; time was not a problem. As we cut branches and filled several baskets the conversation continued:

Li: My increased income has enabled me to have a better social status.

Researcher: Can you give me an example?

Li: Remember the beggar who came into the house at lunch. I was able to give her some money. I am also able to give the dragon dancers some money at Spring Festival time. During the Spring Festival I am also able to

invite my tenants to have dinner with my family to celebrate the festival.

After a while we stopped for break, and Li spoke passionately about education and opportunities. Li raised his son's education as an example:

> My son is an example of someone who has taken his opportunities. He [Zhuang] only went to middle school but studied hard to get himself a place at college. He then went to work but was not satisfied with his income, so he has gone on to study at the postgraduate level at an agricultural university in Yaxi. Although his friends suggested that he may not necessarily get a better income after he finishes his postgraduate course, his wife encouraged him to pursue his dream…He met his wife when they were studying together at college.

Li continued with education and opportunities by giving examples of two village university graduates:

> There was a man in his 30s who was the first university graduate in the village back in the early 1980s. Although it was not permitted for someone in their 30s to go to university then, the village elders made a way for this to happen for him. After graduation he was posted to a nearby village as a farmer, where he started to gain increasing recognition because of his ability to grow 10,000 sweet potatoes per *mu*. The other villagers were only able to do between 1000 and 2000 sweet potatoes per *mu*. When the young graduate first arrived at the village and boasted that he could do over 8,000 sweet potatoes per *mu* the villagers laughed at him, but the villager's uncle who was the Vice-Governor of Sichuan province promoted him to work in the county government in recognition of his achievement. The villager then went on to become a journalist and has recently come back to the village in his retirement. The second contrasting example was of a university graduate of high talent who amounted to nothing. When this graduate was offered an official letter to join a Party meeting he declined and instead made it public about all of the errors contained within the letter. This talented young graduate did not consider the official to be worthy of his position and instead sought that position for himself. After this incident the graduate was not asked to do anything for the village.

Li was animated about the opportunities villagers were given as a result of Deng Xiaoping's policies:

> Many people would not have been able to the things they can today without Deng's policies. [Li turned to the translator and said:] You would not be a student today if it was not for Deng. You probably would be working in your hometown as a farmhand… I would not have this business and my son would not be in college.
>
> Researcher: Why have you been successful under Deng's policies whilst others in the village do not seem to have the same success?
>
> Li: I am not really that wealthy. After the break-up of the commune system I taught myself new skills whereas many of the other villagers continued in the same type of farming…This county was the pilot county for growing mandarins in China…That was how I was given the opportunity to start my business.

To conclude the conversation:

> Researcher: What does your increased income mean for your wife?
>
> Li: She can have a more relaxed life and she does not need to worry about the daily necessities.

6.1.3 Discussion three (D3) on 1 March 2011 from 2.15pm to 3.45pm

Introduction

The discussion was held at the fruit orchard. Li pruned trees as he spoke.

The discussion

Walking to the orchard I asked about the Chinese New year. It was not a good Chinese New year

for Li because his mother went to hospital for surgery. The mother had stomach cancer which had made her ill, but she was getting better.

As we passed the village farmland I asked Li to elaborate on the two photographs taken in discussion two: one was of the large farming area planned for residential and parkland development; the other was of a modern building situated on the county border.

> Researcher: Can you give any more detail about how these scenes relate to development?

With the first one Li merely explained how the land was being taken over for development.

> Li: *Fugui* County is going to buy the farmland on east side of the main road to *Siping* County and a Shanghai company is going to purchase the farmland to the west of the road.

As we crossed the main road he explained the second scene.

> Li: I selected the image of the modern building because it illustrates the difference in development between the two counties. Next to the modern building is a fence that divides the two counties. You can see that one county is rich whilst the other is poor.

Walking to the peak of the hill the entrepreneur started talking about the relocation negotiations:

> Li: At the end of May this year the houses in the street market are going to be demolished for the *Suhe* development.
>
> Researcher: Where will the residents move?
>
> Li: I don't know, but we will be given 300 *yuan* per person per month to find rental accommodation until the new accommodation is built. I am concerned that the rental prices will go up with the increasing demand"…The Party Secretary is going to make a lot of money out of the land. We will get 10,000 *yuan* per *mu*, but it can be sold for 670,000 per *mu*. The Party Secretary has made a lot of money out of buying and selling land.

The respondent continued to speak about the Party Secretary:

> Li: He has eights sons and many wives and mistresses. At the last election he pretended to show support to the villagers by saying that he will not accept a salary from his job, but there are two reasons why he could say this. First, he is already rich. He is worth about 100 million *yuan* [AUD 15 million]. The second reason is that he wants to get support from the Party.

Li raised the topic of the negotiations again:

> Li: Last year the leader of *Siping* County came and spoke to the villagers to announce the relocation and explain the plans for the village, but during the meeting some farmers protested about the plans and the compensation. They asked him to stop reading the announcements because they were so angry.
>
> Researcher: How can the villagers address their concerns? Do the elections make life any better for the villagers?
>
> Li: The major difference in development between *Fugui* County and *Siping* County is that they have power, influence, and *guanxi*. In the past *Fugui* county came to *Siping* County asking for help. We had all the land and food; they had very little. This situation has reversed in the past 20 years. *Fugui* County has been lobbying for a while to get rid of the street market. The leader of *Fugui* County asked the Vice-president of the Sichuan government to come and visit the area to speak to the leader of *Siping* County. *Fugui* County is stronger and has support from higher levels of government.

On the village elections the respondent said:

> Li: They are good but they do not make much difference. [Turning to the translator he continued:] Chinese

will know what elections are all about. If you have money and power you can take part in an election. You need power and influence to become a candidate for leadership. It was [the recent election] not useful for me because I did not have a chance to participate [meaning he did not have an opportunity for candidacy but he did participate in the voting].

Researcher: Is power important for development?

Li: Yes, if you do not have *guanxi* you cannot do very much [said with a hint of disappointment].

Researcher: So what are the hindrances to development in the village?

Li: There are no influential people in the village. We have no connections and no one to support us.

The respondent added the following story of how villagers tried to get support from influential people:

Li: There was an influential professor, a 42 year old man, who used to work in the *Siping* County government. He is the oldest of three brothers, but because his brothers came to ask him constantly for favours the government deployed him to Shanghai. The farmers recently called him to come back to talk with the leader of *Siping* County but there has been no response from that meeting yet. If we do not get a favourable response from that meeting the next option could be for the villagers to visit the central government."

Researcher: Has this happened in other parts of China?

Li gave examples of two occurrences where village relocations resulted in protests:

Li: In Chongqing in the 1990s there was an instance where one million villagers were relocated to different parts of China. The villagers that were sent to Chongqing could not understand the local language and their children also struggled at school. They were promised 3000 *yuan* to relocate but the compensation levels were paid out differently to each group. They protested about this and the story received much news at home and abroad. The second example was in *Yaxi* about four or five years ago when villagers were relocated due to the building of a hydroelectric dam project. The villagers were promised 100,000 *yuan* to relocate but only given 20,000 *yuan* when they moved. They started to protest. Some villagers were injured by police in this protest and others were put into prison.

Li gave the example of an attempt by a local official to relocate a resort owner in *Suhe* Township:

Li: On this occasion the land owner tried to fight the taking over of his land by appealing to his personal connections in the provincial government. Although he was successful in keeping his business, after his protest a group of gangsters came to his house and destroyed his property.

Researcher: Are you concerned that this could happen to you?

Li: It is possible.

Continuing the discussion on the topic of influence, Li spoke about *Suhe*'s previous leader. He attempted to explain how important education was for development although it appeared to be more about connections:

Li: The previous leader of the *Suhe* government was a 28 year old man. He began his office about a year ago but has already been promoted to the county government. When he started working at *Suhe* had a debt of about 80 million *yuan*, but he was able to attract funding from the central government to the township of about 1.3 billion *yuan*. He could do this because he has a mother-in-law working in the central government. His major achievement was to redesign the blueprint of the tourist site, particularly the man-made stream with the stone dragon.

Researcher: Is it possible for the farmers to negotiate for a street market in the *Suhe* development?

Li: The villagers had a market there up until December 4 last year but the *Suhe* government banned it, so we moved the market to the village. That is why the market is at my front door.

Researcher: How important is that market for your income?

Li: The street market is very important. It has enabled me to make a lot of money, but it is one of two sources of income. The other source is my wife's Mah-jong business…At the beginning of the street market people started to sell products at my front door voluntarily, but the government employed some people to get rid of the farmers. The farmers protested however, and the market survived.

On the question of negotiating for a market in the *Suhe* tourist site Li said:

Li: For about 200 years there had been a street market in the main street of the development, but now if you want to do business there you need to pay 60,000 to 70,000 *yuan* per year.

Researcher: It seems like the *Suhe* development has been a bitter sweet experience for you?

[Nodding his head Li said:] I became richer because of the *Suhe* tourist development. The market has now shifted to my front door but now I have to move because of the expansion. I have also lost the tenure on my orchard. The Party Secretary bought out the lease for 50,000 *yuan* per *mu*. Now I have to find another business to do. I only get 35 square metres per person in the new area in place of the four dwellings I currently own. The Party Secretary will get 670,000 *yuan* for the farmland but only 10,000 *yuan* will be paid to the farmers.

Researcher: What things do you think the officials find attractive in the village for development?

Li: The land.

Researcher: So are there any advantages of the relocation?

Li: None. The location of the village is good because it is close to *Suhe*. It has been good for business, but now I have to find a new business. It is not going to be easy.

Researcher: What is development for you?

Li: Good governance [said without any hesitation]

Researcher: What is good governance?

Li: We do not care about who is leading as long as there is good policy in place.

Researcher: What do you mean by good policy?

Li: Good policy is about what is good for the people.

I thanked Li for his time. Li offered some mandarins and saw his guests off the orchard. Along the way to the orchard gate, Li discussed the relocation negotiations again:

Li: The village leader has not taken part in any of the village meetings because he was deployed from somewhere else and has a task to achieve from the officials. He knows exactly what the villagers think about the relocation but he faces a dilemma. On the one hand he supports the villagers, but on the other hand he has pressure from the government too. He does not want to lose his position. Recently there was a Party representative in the village who was sacked because he does not support the relocation.

Li pointed to a large house in the distance (near his houses) and said:

That house used to belong to the Party Secretary. He sold it for 6 million *yuan*. He has made a lot of money in the village by buying and selling property. He also owns the ferry in the village.

6.1.4 Discussion four (D4) on 22 March 2011 from 12.45pm to 2.00pm

Introduction

On this wet-weathered occasion the discussion took place at the orchard, and then moved to an

adjacent hillside where Li and Zhuang held an ancestral worship ceremony.

The discussion

Meeting Li and Zhuang at the orchard gate, I said, “Are you busy this afternoon? Do you have an hour for a chat?” Zhuang offered cigarettes; the translator and I declined. Li lit one up and took a puff while speaking at the same time, “We are going to pay homage to our ancestors this afternoon.” “Can I come along and watch?” I asked. “Sure,” Zhuang and Li replied simultaneously. Pointing to a mandarin, Li said, “Someone has purchased all the mandarins. They are going to turn them into juice for sale to Russia.” Zhuang countered, “It is not going to be sold to Russia. It is going to be sold in China.” With that comment we set off for the Sun’s ancestor’s tomb.

Walking to the tomb I asked when starvation had occurred in the village (Li raised this in previous interviews):

> Li: That was in 1962; when I was seven years old.
>
> Researcher: Why do you pay money to the dragon dancers during the Spring Festival? What is the purpose of that?” [Another follow up question to a previous discussion]
>
> Li: They don’t get paid for doing that. This is something they do voluntarily, so I pay them for their entertainment.

Zhuang wanted to know why I was studying this village and why on a wet day:

> Why are you coming to this village? Have you tried the mountain villages? This village is somewhere in the middle for Chinese villages. If you want to understand the villages in China you need to go to a wide range of villages.
>
> Researcher: I am interested in the grassroots understanding of development in China but as an in-depth study in one village first.

I did not answer the second question about the weather.

> Zhuang: Have you been to any other villagers?
>
> Researcher: I have been to villages in *Yaxi*, *Mujiang*, *Pushan* and *Daqing*.

Before reaching the tomb, Li pointed to a lone tombstone on the hillside. It was not a part of the cemetery. It looked ordinary compared to the cemetery tombstones. Li gave background detail about the departed soul connected with the grave:

> That grave belongs to the first governor of *Fugui* County. He took over the area as a leader in the Peoples’ Liberation Army (PLA) and became the first governor. But it was not easy for him as gangsters continually tried to unsettle his rule and take back the area. He eventually went to them when he was starving, pleading for them to first give him some food then they can kill him. They did not kill him, but he went to an office in *Siping* County and died there a few days later.

We walked for another twenty metres to Li’s ancestor tomb, the tomb of Li’s father. It was a mound of dirt about one and a half metres in circumference at the base rising to a height of about two metres at its apex. There was no tombstone and the Sun family did not own the land. (I had

seen this in neighbouring villages: mounds of dirt with sticks and a flag signalling a tomb.) Zhuang was burning candles at the tomb base. Li, without any prompting, started to explain why they paid homage to ancestors. He was a little awkward and uncomfortable about the ceremony and hence the unsolicited explanation: "We pay homage to our ancestors to let others know that we have an ancestor here, to warn them that this area is where our ancestors lie."

Preparing a stick with a paper yellow flag, Sun walked to the top of the mound and drove the flag into the top to mark territory. He looked satisfied and proud while making this symbolic statement. As the respondents burned fake money to their ancestors (the 100 *yuan* bills looked like play money), Li explained his actions:

> Li: We burn this money so that the ancestors can spend it in the afterlife, the other world.
>
> Researcher: So you believe in another world then, a spiritual world?
>
> [Shaking his head and grinning] Li: No, we don't believe in another world, the afterlife; we just do it as a part of our tradition. It is just like a legend."

As I tried to understand the logic of Li's statements, he asked about paying homage to ancestors in Australia. After giving a brief explanation about funerals and paying visits to grave sites, Li and Zhuang replied: "See, we all [people around the world] do the same things".

I restrained the urge to dispute this and watched them finish their ritual.

On our way back to the orchard I asked: "What did you mean when we last spoke, when you said that 'good policy is about whatever is good for the people'?"

> Li [gave two examples]: Good policy is whatever helps the people. For example, the opening up of China in the 1970s was a good policy. Another good policy was the Household Responsibility System when the government allocated land to the people.

I tested the respondent's view on the quality of development in the village:

> Researcher: On a scale of zero to ten, with zero as underdeveloped and ten as advanced, where do you rank your village, and why?
>
> Li: Nine.
>
> Researcher: Why?
>
> Li: Well, we had to overcome many hardships in the past. Life in the village is much better today than it was in the past.
>
> Zhuang: Compared with the rest of China this village is only a six. The central government has many good policies, but from the county level government down there is a lot of corruption. My father went through many difficult years in the village, so I give nine for the development in this village.

Nearing the orchard gate I asked one last question:

> Researcher: You talk a lot about the Party Secretary. What is the relationship like been between you both?
>
> Li [looking rather interested in this question and pointing to a house in the distance; the one he highlighted in the previous discussion]: See that house over there. The Party Secretary bought that very cheaply in the past, for 10,000 per *mu* and then sold it to a Taiwanese businessman at an inflated price. He bought it back again for

> a low price after the relocation had been announced. Now he has sold it again.

Li talked on how the relocation was good for some but not for others:

> Some people like the plan to relocate because they will do better, but for people like me it is not good. I have four houses.

He pointed towards a village leader's house in *Fugui* County, and explained:

> There are no restrictions in *Fugui* County. They are now allowed to build as many dwellings as they like, and do as many renovations and additions as they like. However, it was not like that before when they had a different leader. In *Siping* County we are restricted to what we can do with property.

At the gate I thanked the Sun's for their time. Li offered mandarins, but I politely declined, explaining that I had another household to visit.

6.2 Case analysis

Governance issues were the stand out feature of this case study. The immanent village relocation was rarely far from the wealthy fruit grower's mind. Much discussion was dedicated to the local government's attitude in the village relocation negotiations, and how villagers might respond to injustice. This household was grateful for the increased opportunities made available during the reform era. The entrepreneur took a comparative view to development, often comparing poorer *Siping* County with richer *Fugui* County. This analysis explains in more detail the meanings of development in the Sun household.

6.2.1 Themes of development

Sphere of development	*Theme of development*
Personal/family	Food security Education (capabilities and opportunities) Better income Traditional values Social status
Village/Local Government	Local economy and tourism (TVE, market access) Fairness and justice (perceived corruption, elections, relocation)
Nation	Central government policy

Food security:

The abundance of food available today was contrasted with the starvation years under the commune system (D1 and D4). Starvation was a serious issue in this household, with the suggestion that the businessman's family almost died in those days. He said "pigs eat better today than we did back then." Food security was a central theme of development in that there was no starvation today.

Education (capabilities and opportunities):

Education was a strong and common theme in this case. It was first raised as the lost opportunity

for a good education (the poor the quality of education the main respondent experienced during his childhood and youth), and later discussed as being very important for the son's life (D1). Nevertheless, despite lacking higher education the businessman hinted that he was well educated with fruit growing industry knowledge, and with skills for undertaking minor tasks such as building the orchard cabin. Higher level education was very important for the son's independence: "he does not need to borrow money from his relatives." It was prized as a major vehicle for development, but of little value without a good attitude. Two examples were given: one where a well-educated villager held a poor attitude toward local officials and became irrelevant; and another humble university-educated villager who took all opportunities in spite of hardship and became a county level government official (D2). Deng Xiaoping's Opening Up policy was accredited with the better quality of education in China today, with the respondent suggesting to the translator that he would be working on the farm if not for Deng. The respondent viewed education as a major factor in development.

Better income:

More income enabled this household to have more things today than in the past. Income potential was increased with a policy such as the removal of heavy taxation requirements (D1). Yet it was Deng Xiaoping who was responsible for the household's higher income, and allowed for a better diet, more household appliances, and a bigger house. Wealth permitted the businessman to help others in the community, invite friends to dinner, and pay the dragon dancers at Spring Festival time; and these were discussed in the context of social status (D2). Increased security was also cited as a benefit of a higher income. In discussion two, the fruit grower was confident that although faced with an uncertain future (in relation to the relocation plans), had earned enough to start business in another field. In addition, a higher income today meant that the wife was free from worry about the daily necessities of life; she could lead a more relaxed life. Several factors that threatened income were raised, such as poor weather and the lack of good governance and regulation, but the better income theme was prominent in the household story.

Traditional values:

Traditional values were not raised directly as development, but the actions of Li and Zhuang during the ancestral worship ceremony suggested it held some significance (D4). The ceremonial rituals performed had some psychological or emotional benefit, but it was not associated with religion. It was explained as a cultural tradition rather than spiritual worship, more so as cultural development.

Social status:

Social status was considered as being useful to achieving goals; without social status and

influence achievements were difficult. The famous people buried in the cemetery behind the orchard were an indication of importance and status. Another example of status was the ability to help a beggar during lunch (D2). The social status theme was particularly strong in discussion three, with story of the young *Suhe* leader who brought significant growth to the ancient tourist town: how the official was able to increase *Suhe*'s budget with social status (with family connections in the central government). Lack of social status was also discussed (in relation to the village relocation negotiations). In the negotiations villagers were powerless without social status and *guanxi*. Social status was considered essential if villagers were to achieve a reasonable relocation outcome. Social status was necessary: it increased capabilities, and it was associated with power and influence, and *guanxi*.

Local economy and tourism:

The *Suhe* ancient tourist town growth was crucial for the household and village economy, yet towards the discussion's end it was described as a bitter-sweet experience. It was first indicated that the tourist site was very good because it increased tourist numbers and revenue. In a later discussion, however, it was explained that after December 2010 the *Suhe* Township tried to halt the *Tiantang* the street market because of the poor image it gave tourists. On one hand the businessman was grateful for *Suhe*'s tourist numbers and larger markets, but on the other hand its growth lay behind *Tiantang*'s relocation debate and the respondent's potential loss of wealth and property. The businessman linked personal success with *Suhe*'s growth over several decades. It figured largely in the household's view of development.

Fairness and justice:

Improper conduct in village elections, and unfairness within the proposed village relocation plans, were issues raised in this household. It was regularly insinuated that the Party Secretary was corrupt and immoral. Local government corruption was deemed a hindrance to development: limiting villager opportunities for business, wealth, and status. It was indicated that the village election was not fair because the respondent was not permitted to run as a candidate (the candidates were selected by 'county officials') (D3), and because candidates bribed villagers to win selection (D1). There was also the suggestion that the Party Secretary maintained political power by sweetening villagers with payments and dinners; and that the amount spent on bribery was a pittance compared to what the official earned with government influence. Zhuang supported his father's allegations in discussion four by suggesting that government was riddled with corruption from the county level downwards. The common villager could solve problems caused by unfairness and injustice through solidarity and by looking for influential people to advocate on their behalf at higher levels of government. The importance placed on fair and transparent governance was evident in the household ranking of political development as the highest

dimension of development.

Central government policy:

The household placed much trust in the central government's policies. In earlier discussions, Deng Xiaoping's reform policies were spoken of highly: about how they had given many villagers opportunities. But it was policies relating to education and agriculture that were particularly development-related, and in discussion four—when ranking the quality of development in the village—the Household Responsibility System policy was noted as having made the most significant impact on villagers' lives. It was suggested that central government policy was good, but that it was not properly applied: "The central government has many good policies, but from the county level down there is a lot of corruption." This household attributed village development to central government policy and related it with good governance: policy was "whatever is good for the people".

6.2.2 Historical perspective

Development was occasionally discussed from a historical perspective. It was interesting that when ranking the quality of development in *Tiantang* village from zero to ten, respondents took a historical and comparative approach. Table 4 shows the ways that past was compared with present.

Past	*Present*
Starvation under Mao	*Plenty of good food*
Could not earn much	*Better incomes*
Religion pushed underground	Freedom to practice religion of choice
Class struggle at middle school	*No political class struggle*
Zong Jinli's mother worked on farm	Zong Jinli's mother works in factory
Poor education, limited opportunity for a good education	Many have the opportunity for a good education today
No business opportunities	Opportunities for business
In the past *Fugui* used to be wealthy and *Siping* County poor	Today *Siping* County is wealthy and *Fugui* County is poor

Table 4 Historical perspectives in the Sun household

This list includes political and economic aspects of development which were the top two dimensional rankings made in discussion one. Comparisons were made directly in relation to the businessman's life experience, and they demonstrate the perception of a discontinuity in development after Mao. The reform era was viewed as a positive new epoch in the village, even though when asked to take photographs on development the fruit grower said: "development has not yet arrived [in the village]." From a historical perspective it was considered that the village had significantly improved in terms of food security, incomes, and freedoms and opportunities; but that development had not arrived because *Fugui* County surged ahead of *Siping* County over

recent decades.

6.2.3 Spatial perspective

The main respondent often contrasted *Fugui* County with *Siping* County in this case. *Siping*'s economy was once stronger than *Fugui*'s because of strong agriculture, but tourism had promoted economic expansion in *Fugui* County. It was evident that the household was envious of Fugui County's economic success: the image selected to identify development in '*Tiantang*' village was the "beautiful" modern buildings in *Fugui* County. It appeared that the household wanted the building development of *Suhe* tourist town in *Tiantang*, and recognised that agriculture was no longer viable. The main respondent attributed the contrast between the counties to the quality of the local government officials. In discussion four, the respondent noted that *Fugui* County permitted building permits, but that these were not available to *Tiantang* villagers.

Tiantang was compared with villages across China. While the longitudinal development in *Tiantang* village was ranked highly, spatially it was ranked it as an average Chinese village (with corruption as the main problem). Household respondents perceived spatial differences in development in terms of local governance quality.

6.3 Analysis in relation to the literature review

6.3.1 Western theories of development

Western influences were not evident in the household stories, even though the businessman was engaged in international trade. For this case, the global economy represented larger markets and opportunities, but not considered as a force playing an obvious role in the village; or the 'global' as exclusively Western.

6.3.2 Chinese themes of development

Respondents spoke little on traditional values. There was no household religious belief, but it was explained that temples had returned to *Suhe* after their demise during the Cultural Revolution. Religion was not discussed as a part of *Tiantang* village life. It was interesting that no overt Daoist, Confucianist, or Buddhist themes of development appeared in the household discourse; however, the practice of ancestral worship held some profound cultural meaning. The practice of ancestral worship was not discussed as spiritual, but traditional and cultural. It was conceptualised as ancestral lineage continuity and connected with the household's community status.

Deng's rise to power represented a clear turning point in the businessman's personal life and household, as well as the village. But whilst praising Deng and the Open Door policy (and the current central government), the household had little faith in the local government's ability to carry out the central government's directives fairly and justly. Good governance at the local level was important for the sustainability and improvement of Li's livelihood. The lack of development

within *Tiantang* village was attributed to perceived local government corruption (a centuries-old dilemma). It was by the elite traditional patronage system that development seemed to happen in this village rather than through the central government emphasis of transparency, fairness and the rule of law.

6.3.3 Themes of development in Chinese village life

Political:

Politics was discussed through the prism of the relationship between local governance and common village. At the upper village level, it was regarded as government lacking good governance (policy implementation), and at the common village level it was about villagers maintaining fairness and justice for their household livelihood. Political development was the most important dimension of development in this case as it related directly to the fruit grower's business prospects and success. This case associated political development with power, influence and status (D3).

Economic:

Economic development was conceptualised as community wealth and status, and associated with politics. The main respondent viewed economic development in terms of the fruit growing business, and the benefits of the *Suhe* TVE for the local economy. *Suhe* ancient town was development because it had modern looking buildings and provided business opportunities. The TVE's growth was made possible because of the Household Responsibility System. It was explained that this policy was the reason behind the launch/surge of local economic development, and therefore the central government played a vital role in economic development. Without status, villagers were not able gain power and influence, and therefore greater capabilities for economic development.

Cultural:

Cultural development had much to do with education and skills. Education expanded an individual's abilities for success in business and life (D2). While not having a proper education, the main respondent considered himself as a cultured person and good citizen (D2), but made no claim to having high culture. Higher education was viewed as providing better opportunities in life; as well as more money, power, influence and social status (D2). Cultural development and education were also related to proper behaviour and conduct in daily affairs: a good attitude was as essential as an educational qualification (D2). This case showed that cultural development was connected with political and economic development within the household and village context.

Environmental:

Environmental development was discussed from several angles. First, as the importance of maintaining good air quality, and its value for the fruit growing business (D1); and second, in terms of village aesthetics, which included the quality of the buildings and houses, and the planned river bank project (D3). Meanings of environmental development were mostly about air quality maintenance, but environment was also linked to local business and economic development.

Social:

Social development was about status in the village context. The household discourse showed the importance of the ability to do good deeds for family and community. To be increasing in wealth was to be socially developing in this case.

Spiritual:

There was no evocative concept of spiritual development in this case. Householders held no believe in a spiritual world.

6.4 Conclusion

This study revealed a view of development that was focussed on local village governance and capabilities. The household considered good governance as essential because it was the means through which business could improve, and through which household capabilities might expand. Yet, the study indicates that the household was powerless to improve its situation or even prevent a potential decline in socio-economic status without *guanxi*. Development was equated with 'opportunity' and 'capability', but there appeared to be a limit as to how far officials would allow opportunities. It was interesting in this case that development was regularly discussed as power, influence, and status.

Chapter 7 - The Liu Zhong Household

Classification	*Age*	*Occupation*	*Background*
Mr. Liu Zhong (father and widower)	71	Retired Farmer, railway worker, construction worker, ferryman	Village electoral officer; came from landlord class; wife died when he was 40; remarried in 1995 but left that wife; lifelong village resident; has an 80 year old brother in the village
Liu spoke about his son, Mr. Xiao Zhong, 38, a factory worker, married and living in another Sichuan city; and his daughter, Mrs. Mei Wang, 41, a worker in a chemical factory, married and living in another Sichuan city. Liu also talked about his grandson, Mei's son, a student in middle school.			

7.1 The discussions

7.1.1 Discussion one (D1) on 17 December 2010 from 10.45am to 12.45pm

Introduction

The discussion occurred in the common area of the respondent's home. Liu was very eager to discuss development.

The discussion

Liu discussed the various aspects of development as follows:

Cultural development: Cultural development was the most important aspect of development. When asked why cultural development was number one, Liu commented: "Education gives me knowledge." Cultural development was synonymous with education. This was demonstrated in the early part of the discussion, when Liu got a photo album from the bedroom to show pictures of a school reunion, and his family. He went into detail about various classmates from school days. The theme of education was again evident when reference was made to several of his grandson's education certificates on the living room wall. He explained what they were for, and how bright his grandchildren were.

On the topic of cultural development Liu also discussed his previous family classification of landlord. "This house used to belong to my family," Liu said—"However, during the Mao days (before the PRC was established) the size of my family's property was much larger. It was divided up to share among the villagers. We were forced to hand over some of our land".

The respondent also spoke on education in relation to himself, and his daughter:

> I could only go middle school. To go to high school I would have been required to travel a long distance and attend very competitive exams before I could be accepted...When my two children went to school they were very bright, particularly my daughter... My daughter passed the exam to attend a normal university; however, she did not end up going to university because families with better connections got in ahead of her. She was very disappointed and in the end gave up on that dream, got married, and found a job.

The topic petered out with the comment that education was very important because it gave power and skills to become successful. Liu continued by explaining that he built the house himself. He gave a brief tour of the house highlighting the newly installed gas oven.

Economic development: The discussion on economic development started as follows:

> Liu: A company from Shanghai called 'Jiaxiguo' [not the real name] is going to purchase the village land to extend the ancient tourist town. As compensation the company will build new residences at a nearby location and pay monthly life insurance.
>
> Researcher: How do you feel about this move?
>
> Liu: I am fine with the move because it is close to where I am now, and I have no special memories here.

Liu discussed land ownership and work in the past:

> Liu: Many years ago the government owned all the farm land. All of the farm labour was organized. We were paid according to the type of work that we did, and how hard we worked. We were mainly paid for our labour with food but workers were also paid a minimal wage…There was no market back then, only government supply centres…There was also no freedom of movement back then, and we had to report to work every day.

The respondent raised the topic of poverty when the older brother entered to join the conversation. The brothers asked whether poverty existed in Australia, and listed the areas in China that had poverty, such as Gansu and Guilin. It seemed the gentlemen did not consider themselves as living in poverty, even though they were aware it existed in China.

Social development: This topic at first seemed to confuse Liu. He asked what I meant by 'social'. I responded by asking about his spare time activities. Liu discussed the lack of activities in the village stating that there was no dancing. He liked dancing. Liu also mentioned that during the Spring Festival the village held a dragon parade. The 'social' did not appear to be about spare time activity. Liu answered the question about spare time activities without connecting it with social development.

Liu went on to discuss his first marriage. (I began to realize that 'social' had something to do with status.):

> I got married in the late 1960s. I dated my wife for six years before we got married. I have a traditional view of courtship and marriage [meaning that it is important to get to know your potential spouse before marriage]…She was a member of the Youth Communist Party, an official. It was very difficult to get married because of our different social status.

I later asked the translator what Liu meant by this, and she remarked that the wife had a higher social status because of Party membership. Liu advised that his wife had died, and spoke on life as a widower and single father:

> I had to do the duties of both mother and father when taking care of my two children. [It was apparent by the way he spoke about this that it had been quite a heavy burden for him.] When my children got older they encouraged me to find another life partner to keep me company, so I married a woman from *Xiguan* in 1995 but I later left her because her personality was too strong. [He corrected himself] We did not have compatible personalities.

Political development: When asked about political development, Liu made the following

comments (I first asked whether he belonged to the Party):

> I am not a Party member…I would rather keep my life safe. [When asked to explain further:]. The landlord class underwent much trouble from the Party years ago.
>
> Researcher: What about the village election tomorrow?
>
> Liu: I am not really concerned about the village election tomorrow because it is just form and no substance…I am a representative of the village in the selection of candidates.

[I thought Liu might be on the village committee, so I became more careful about discussing politics].

The discussion turned to voting and the respondent contradicted himself:

> Liu: Voting is a good initiative in the village because in the past the government selected the village leader, but now the villagers can choose from a variety of candidates…The Chinese government is trying to learn about Western elections, things such as having candidates give speeches about their policies and what they will do for the village.

Environmental development:

> Liu: I enjoy living in the countryside because the air quality is much better than in the big cities… It is good for my health...The air in Shanghai and Guangdong is very polluted.

Spiritual development: When asked about spiritual development, Liu said:

> It is not really connected to my daily life.
>
> Zhou [the older brother asked]: What is your religion?
>
> Researcher: Christianity
>
> Zhou: There are people in the village who believe in Western religion such as Christianity.
>
> Liu: Ancestral worship is a tradition in China…It is about honouring and protecting your family. [Liu seemed to suggest that it is a way of preserving family]. It is about paying respect to the elderly and protecting the young.

7.1.2 Discussion two (D2) on 18 January 2011 from 12.00pm to 2.00pm

Introduction

For this discussion I invited Liu to a village restaurant. It ended with a tour of the village and *Suhe* tourist town. Liu's grandson attended lunch but did not join the conversation.

The discussion

At lunch Liu started the conversation by talking about the difference between the Mao era and now:

> It was very hard times back then; the landlord class was treated very badly by Mao…Mao oppressed the intelligent people during the revolution because he was afraid of them; afraid that he would be overthrown…He just made the people work hard, so the people did not have a chance to go to school. However, when the People's Republic of China was established Mao and the Communist Party started using the intelligent people from the Guomindang in his development plans…Knowledge is very important.

Researcher: What can the villagers do when the leadership is oppressive, such as during Mao's time?

Liu: Obey and do not act aggressively toward the government.

Liu raised the topic of the better quality of food today:

Even though my family was rich, we could only eat rice and noodles everyday…We only ate 1 kg of rice each day, but now we eat many types of food, more vegetables. My grandson now drinks milk. This was impossible in the past.

Liu discussed his grandson's education, and contrasted this with his own:

I want my grandson to study hard and gain knowledge as this will help him to find a good job in the future…I hope that my grandson can get a job in researching science and technology...A good education can raise the status of my grandson and give him a better life and self-esteem…It will give him power and influence.

Researcher: What about your grandson's English language skills?

Liu: It would be good if he could learn English and study in a foreign country, but he does not like learning English so I am not really concerned if this does not happen…He [grandson] is not good at English…I do not want my grandson to work in the government because I believes that it is too controversial. Society can change quickly, at any moment, so it is best to stay away from politics; you can easily get into trouble...This was the advice that my father gave to me...It is important that the grandson make a useful and productive contribution to Chinese society.

Researcher: What values would you like to pass on to your grandson?

Liu: Studying hard is the best advice I could give.

Researcher: Are you jealous of your grandson, with the opportunities that the younger generation has today?

Liu: I am jealous of my grandson because he now has many more opportunities than when I was young. When I was young I had to walk sixty kilometres to school, starting early in the morning and arriving at three in the afternoon… I stayed at school for a week and came home on the weekends... Science and technology is much better in China today: we have better roads and transportation and you can now travel long distances without getting permission.

The conversation shifted to foreign influences:

Researcher: Have there been any foreign influences in the village?

Liu: I would welcome foreign investment because the Western nations are better than China in science and technology, and China needs to learn from them.

Researcher: Would you like to have a factory in your village?

Liu: Yes.

Researcher: What type of factory?

Liu: Any type. Foreign investment in the villages is good for rural China: it improves the wellbeing of the people.

Researcher: In what way?

Liu: It creates more jobs for the people and they can learn from foreigners. Villagers can earn more money and it builds a better infrastructure.

Researcher: Have there have been any negative Western influences in China?

Liu: None.

The respondent also talked about what makes him proud to be Chinese by introducing the topic of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games:

> Liu: The Olympics made me very proud to be Chinese because it showed that China is developing and that we are catching up with the rest of the world.
>
> Researcher: Which sports did you like watching during the Olympics?
>
> Liu: None...China is a top performing nation now, behind Russia now, I think. The Olympic Games showed that China is now strong and powerful in the world. I do not like watching sport much. [It was more that the Olympics represented Chinese development that he liked the event].
>
> Researcher: What else makes you proud to be Chinese?
>
> Liu: China is now doing much better in areas such as industry, agriculture and transportation. When students used to go abroad to study at Western universities, the government's requirement was that they deposit a large sum of money in a bank account because they were afraid the students would not return. Now this is no longer a requirement. The graduates know that they can return to a good job with an excellent salary.

We discussed the visit of the US military secretary to Beijing [It was in the news that day]:

> Liu: For China to expand its military is very important; to maintain its development and security. China is a harmonious and peaceful society and we do not want to fight anyone, but we do need to defend ourselves as we are now in the top three economies in the world. The visit is good because it can improve the relationship between our countries.
>
> Researcher: What ideas would you impart to the nation if you were the Chinese President?
>
> Liu: I would like to learn about how to improve relations between China and other countries, 'import' more science and technology from advanced countries, to listen to other people's ideas…China's military development makes me feel safe and secure. It is unlikely that China will be involved in a war. Everyone in China loves peace.

The conversation shifted to values:

> Researcher: In our last discussion you said that you do not have a religion. What values or principles then, do you live your life by?
>
> Liu: I follow what the leaders are doing.
>
> Researcher: Is that was a Confucian idea?
>
> Liu: Confucius' ideas teach people to study hard and develop.
>
> Researcher: What does that mean?
>
> Liu: It means to earn more money. The idea behind the advice for my grandson to study hard and create a better life is from Confucius.
>
> Researcher: Are you concerned that, with rapid growth, China might lose some of its traditional values?
>
> Liu: I am not really sure about this, but that I think that Confucian values will stay. The government is now promoting Confucian ideas, so it would be disappointing if these values were to disappear.
>
> Researcher: What traditional values in particular are the most important to maintain?
>
> Liu: Knowledge.

We discussed China's history:

> Researcher: Do you think that China might be returning to the same position it had in the world 500 years

ago?

Liu: China was the top nation back then. Other nations were afraid to offend China. They served China by doing good trade and even gave their daughters to be married, to build good relations. China is now improving and is only behind America and Europe. I believe that the Tang dynasty was China's greatest because of the power and influence it achieved.

We discussed the importance of village governance:

Researcher: How important is the local government for development in the village?

Liu: Very important. The government is putting in very good policies to attract foreign investment. For example, the Shanghai real estate company that is doing residential and tourist development in the area. Life is much better for me now. I follow what the government is doing. [Liu's tone suggested that he had a strong trust in the way the government is leading.]

Liu seemed to be knowledgeable on many subjects. He quickly grasped the purpose of the discussions; the type of information required. I did not need to repeat or reframe questions. Yet Liu kept apologising for not having a good education. I wanted to find out where Liu acquired knowledge:

Liu: I do not read because I am getting too old now and my mind is slow. I like to watch the news on television because this keeps me up to date on world affairs.

Noticing that the respondent looked healthy for a 71 year old, I asked:

How do you manage to stay healthy?

Liu: I work, exercise and play Mah-jong with my friends.

Researcher: Do you use Chinese traditional medicine when you get sick?

Liu: I do not really get sick. I have only used traditional Chinese medicine once a long time ago when I had a motorbike accident. Traditional medicine in the village is not as good as in the big cities... Chinese medicine treats the whole body and is gradual, whereas Western medicine treats a specific part and offers immediate relief…Both Western and Chinese can complement each other.

Researcher: More work or more leisure?

Liu: More work. I just play Mah-jong with friends to have fun and past the time away.

After lunch Liu enthusiastically led a tour to places that represented development. We first went to a boat on the river then to several places in *Suhe*. Liu's main objective for the afternoon was to show off the new primary and middle school building built three years ago. On the way, Liu explained that in the past temples served as a place of education, but today the government was building proper schools. Passing through *Suhe*—which was in a town of about 20,000 people—I was struck by the vastness of the building projects. *Suhe*'s construction was large-scale and ongoing, progressing at a frantic pace. Yet although it was a Tuesday, there were hardly any tourists.

Photograph 5 Primary and Middle school in *Suhe*

Researcher: Why does it seem that development has to happen quickly?

Liu: In the past China wasted a lot of time and lagged behind, so now we need to catch up with the rest of the world. We do not want to lag behind other nations. We want to be the same or better. It is a shame to lag behind.

7.1.3 Discussion three (D3) 27 February 2011 from 10.40am to 1.40pm

Introduction

This discussion took place at Liu's workplace. He worked part-time at a brick-making factory owned by his nephew. We had lunch in Liu's office during the conversation.

The discussion

I started by asking about the respondent's role in the village election and whether the election had improved the life of villagers:

Liu: As the Electoral Officer it was my job to organise the elections and count the votes.

Liu explained he was a respected village member; that the village committee selected him as the most favoured electoral officer:

Liu: I was paid more than the other workers.

Researcher: Did the elections have any benefits for the villagers?

Liu: It gave me some temporary employment

We discussed whether *Suhe*'s tourist town was good for the village:

Liu: It has been good for the village. The village economy has expanded; it has created employment for the villagers, and there are more tourists coming past…It has been particularly beneficial for the residents who live in the street market because they can do business from their front door…Some houses have been used as resort hotels for tourists.

Researcher: I understand that the tourist development has created some conflict?

Liu: Yes, there have been on-going disputes between *Fugui* County and some of the villagers over land. The expansion of *Suhe* has created disputes.

Researcher: Will the villagers get a fair deal?

Liu: The relocation is good for me because my house was built in the 1950s. I believe that I will get a much better house in the new location… Some people do not want to move, particularly the people in the street market because they have bigger houses.

Although the respondent believed he would receive a fair relocation package, he thought corruption was involved:

Liu: I think the government is making some money out of the deal. [The respondent then went on to talk about the conflict from both sides]…A company from Shanghai is going to buy the land, but the land is not our property to sell. We [the villagers] do not have the right to sell the land. Some officials will make money out of the sale… When leaders were selected in the past, their past and life experience were taken into consideration, but this has changed. In the past you could not serve as leader and run a brothel, but nowadays this is accepted.

Researcher: So are there any hindrances to development in your village?

Liu: No.

Handing Liu some photographs (the photographs taken on development in discussion two), I asked him to select a few that were particularly relevant to the concept of development. Liu commented, "I do not think that development has yet reached the village." Liu flicked through the photographs and selected four. Liu's comment on each photograph was:

Boats in *Suhe*:

Liu: I used to work as a ferryman on these boats…This is development because these boats are much better than in the past…They do not require manpower...

Researcher: How many places have you worked?

Liu: …a farmer, ferryman, stone cutter, construction worker…on railway tunnels…and I have also done some work in education.

Ferry in *Tiantang* village:

Liu: The same…better quality boat than in the past

Temple in *Suhe*:

Liu: This one is about development because during Mao's time temples were not allowed, but nowadays they are coming back.

Factory on other side of river:

Liu: This is a factory but I do not know what kind of factory.

Researcher: Would you like more factories like this one in your village?

Liu: Yes. It looks good. [Liu's tone and facial expression suggested that he liked the look of this factory.]

We discussed the village's location:

Liu: The village is in a good location because it is near *Xiguan* and also because of China's 'go west' policy…*Siping* is the poorest county in the area...Shanghai and Fujian have an advantage because they are on the coast line, but the 'go west' policy has been working well over the past eleven years. In a few years *Xiguan* will be as big as Beijing. *Xiguan* is expanding towards the village. Soon there will be a fifth ring road in this area.

Researcher: Is there anything about the environment of the village that benefits the villagers?

Liu: The air quality is good; there are no factories, and no pollution.

Researcher: Does it have anything to do with the county's reputation for the longevity of its people?

Liu: The longevity in the village is probably due to the water and the peoples' attitudes, but then each person's attitude is different.

Researcher: What attitude is that?

Liu: Being content with your life…There was a legendary figure called Peng Zhu who lived to the age of 800 years in ancient times. It could have something to do with this legend [Liu said this jokingly and with a smirk on his face].

I tested another menu item with:

Researcher: Can you talk about *xiaokang* in relation to your village?"

Liu: We are now living in a *xiaokang* society, but there is still a large gap between China and the Western world.

We talked about Liu's life. I wanted to know whether he received support to raise his children:

Liu: I did not have any support and it was very difficult back then. Back then I worked in the commune all day. It was hard work every day then I would have to come home and find branches to burn to cook food for my children. We did not have gas stoves back then. Now we have gas. I paid a once off 1000 *yuan* payment to install pump water, and a once off payment of 4800 *yuan* to install gas.

The conversation turned to the topic of his second wife:

Liu: She wanted me to be submissive so it did not work. She offered to pay me 300 *yuan* per month to leave my home and come and live with her in *Xiguan*. I stayed there for nine months but she didn't pay me anything. I returned home because I thought she might abandon me, and because I might lose my home.

Liu insisted that we have a tour of the brick factory:

Liu [walking past several large stacks of bricks ready for export]: The quality of the bricks is much better than in the past. In the past the bricks were made of clay and made by hand, but now the bricks are stronger and made by an organised process and by heating with coal…The bricks cost three *jiao* each. [During the tour he also made comment several times that he was proud that his nephew is the owner of the factory].

Back in his office, the conversation continued around connections. Liu spoke about classmates from middle school:

Liu: Many are successful businessmen and women, and others have good jobs in government [said proudly]. They all respect me.

Researcher: Could they get you employment in a government position?

Liu [smiling]: I did not finish middle school and I would not trouble them with that. With my family

> background [the landlord class] I did not get the chance to be allocated higher level employment…I do not regret anything in my life.

Towards the end of the discussion Liu discussed plans for the next day:

> Liu: Tomorrow I will be travelling to *Xiguan* to take a look at the new subway system…There is a new bus station being built near the *Suhe*. It will come under the control of a tourist centre.

To conclude I asked:

> Researcher: What does development mean for you?
>
> Liu: A better life. [said without much pondering]… At a national level, it is about military development, science and technology, and economic development.
>
> Researcher: Which is more important, leadership or policy?
>
> Liu: We don't care too much about which party is ruling, what counts is good policy.

7.1.4 Discussion four (D4) on 17 March 2011 from 1.00pm to 3.30pm

Introduction

This discussion started in Liu's home, and then we travelled to a luxurious housing estate near his workplace. Liu had just returned from the markets when I arrived. His cousin Cao joined the conversation and actively participated. The cousin's details were:

Classification	*Age*	*Occupations*	*Background*
Mr. Cao Wei (cousin)	68	Farmer, Cook	Came from landlord class; village resident from the age of six; suffered torture during Mao era; lived with wife (but living in *Siping* during discussions) and had four daughters (living elsewhere) and one son (living in Chongqing)

The discussion

"How was your trip to the subway in *Xiguan* last week?" I began, peeling strips off a sugar cane stick. "Really good," Liu replied. "Why did you want to see it?" I continued. "Something new and fresh," he explained—"I am going to take my grandson to see it on the weekend. I want to broaden his mind." "Why do you think something like the subway has been made possible? What factors have contributed to the building of the subway?" I probed. "China's economy is growing, of course" he said, spitting chewed sugar cane onto the floor.

We discussed what the respondent meant by defining development as 'a better life' in the previous interview. I asked the translator to find out what Chinese characters Liu used to explain the phrase. Liu said that "a better life is *kaixing*", which means "to be happy." The respondent led me to the kitchen to explain *kaixing*. Liu showed off the new gas stove. "This cost me 2,800 *yuan*", he boasted. I followed Liu into the backyard where he pointed to a water pump under a sink. Liu wore a broad grin on this tour. Back in the common area, he declared, "The gap between

urban and rural is getting smaller."

Photograph 6 Liu's newly installed gas stove

We discussed the topic of farmland. I asked whether he owned farmland. Liu said, "Yes, but the officials told me to stop growing crops six months ago, so I don't grow anything anymore." "What did you used to grow?" I enquired. "Oh, some wheat and rice: some for consumption, some for sale, and some for the pigs and ducks [he no longer had animals]."

Liu wanted to travel to a 'building construction'. I was not immediately clear about Liu's plan, but I could tell he wanted to explain development. Cao Wei, Liu's neighbour and cousin, had arrived and accepted an invitation to join. Before departing, Cao invited me next door to show his home. He pointed to a picture of a young Deng Xiaoping on the living room wall. Throughout the afternoon Cao was very eager to tell his story of hardship in the village during Mao's leadership.

In the main street Liu and Cao vigorously bargained with a rickshaw driver, to reduce the price for a return trip from 60 *yuan*. Other villagers joined the event in support of either side (the art of bargaining was humorous, a performance to reach the middle ground, with both side understanding how to play this game). Liu rejected the offer of 60, but another driver accepted 50 *yuan*. On our way to the site, about ten kilometres from the village (travelling at about 40 kilometres per hour) Cao talked the most, giving details of earlier years. Here were some of Cao's comments:

> I lived in the village since I was a small boy, from when I was about 5 or 6. I lived in *Xiguan* before then…. I

> am 68 years old now…..Life was very hard during Mao's era. China went backwards and lost many years because of Mao….In my teenage years the officials in the village tortured me. They would hang me up from the ceiling and slap me around the face. They didn't like the landlord class. My family belonged to the landlord class. Many people died of starvation then. If you belonged to the landlord class you were not permitted to marry. The only women that were left to marry were disabled from childhood from a poor diet. I ran away from the village when I was 15 or 16 and went to *Wenjiang* to live. I set off with only a few carrots and without any shoes. I hoped that someone would adopt me….I worked as a wheat harvester….I eventually returned to the village. I really wanted to kill those who had tortured me. I was filled with anger. But when I returned the other villagers treated me poorly. They would not share any food with me, so I thought about running away again. I thought about escaping to another province or even a foreign country, but China's terrain is very tough and vast, so I didn't leave….you could write a book or make a movie out of my life story. It would make people weep.

I interjected to ask Liu whether he experienced torture. Liu said (smiling), "No. My parents died when I was young so they didn't treat me badly."

Cao used our conversation as an opportunity to vent disappointment, but was not a bitter man. I was impressed by how he had recovered after years of torture. Cao was full of interesting stories, so I rarely asked probing questions. He raised topics such as family, work, and government. Here was more of what he said:

> I have three sons and one daughter. My wife lives in Pingqiong looking after our grandchild…When I am old my son who lives in Chongqing will take care of me. He works as a government official as a captain in the cultural department. He has four apartments in Chongqing so I will go and live there…The communist party is really good today. No one bullies anymore and their policies are really good…twelfth five-year plan offers social security, health benefits, and insurance for older people, and this will get better in the future…After I worked as a farmer during the commune days I left to work in Chongqing at the airport as a cook.

One the way to the construction site I asked Liu about classmates. "You often talk about your classmates. What do they mean to you?" I asked. "My classmates come from all walks of life: government officials, teachers, farmers, and factory workers. When we go out together the rich ones always pay for everything. There is no class status when we are together," he explained. "Does this have anything to do with your concept of development?" I pressed. "No. They are all retired now," he said. Liu was really saying that the classmates do not have anything to do with 'doing' development anymore.

The topic of the China's inflation problem arose during our journey. Cao said that it did not bother him, and Liu said the same. Liu said, "Inflation is a phenomenon that is happening all around the world at the moment."

The 'construction site' was a massive housing estate that emerged over five years, with construction still in progress. When we disembarked the rickshaw a security guard asked the driver to park away from the estate. Liu explained that several villages were demolished in the construction of this estate, but that villagers were offered the compensation of employment security in exchange.

Photograph 7 Houses in luxurious estate

Walking around the housing estate, the two elderly gentlemen smiled. “After all that you have just told me about your life under Mao, how does it make you feel to see this?” I asked Cao. “It makes me very happy. I never thought I’d live the day to see this,” he replied. I joked with them that they might be relocated to this estate. Liu smiled and said, “No one in the village can afford these houses.” Cao pondered and said, “Fifty years of Mao is like one year of Deng.”

They wanted to look inside one of the mansions, so Liu asked me to act as a buyer. I did not need to play that role because the mansion was open to the public. The three-storey mansion was impressive: it had a large garden, wooden internal staircases, expensive furniture, a large pool and barbeque area, and overlooked most other houses in the estate and parkland. We tried to guess how much it was worth as the real estate staff did not know (they said we needed to go to the sales office to find out). Liu said, “I think it is worth at least seven million *yuan”*.

On our way to find the rickshaw, I asked Liu a follow-up question from previous interviews. “You ranked cultural development as the most important dimension of development. How does this relate to a ‘better life’?” He discussed how education was vital for his grandson and commented that “in Mao’s day education was not possible, but today it is important.” Liu supported this with an example:

> I had a classmate who was selected by the party to study and work in a government job in Shanghai. He was selected because he had a good social background: all of his family were Party members, they were not from the landlord class, and he didn’t have any contacts with people from Hong Kong or Taiwan. When Deng came to power he was sent back home because it was found that he could not do a good job. He did not have any ability.

As the elderly gentlemen argued over Mao and Deng, I interrupted to asking Liu whether he had any further insights on development. He chose the village relocation:

> The new houses that we will be moving into will be built in the same style as the buildings in the *Suhe* tourist town. The houses that we live in now will be turned into shops, an extension of the current tourist town. We will be moving to the street near the bus terminal and towards the mountains to the west. We will be able to do some business from our houses or we can rent space to business people. The upstairs will be form living and the downstairs for business. The farmland will be turned into modern housing and parkland."

When Liu said this I understood why he held no concern about losing the gatekeeper job. It seemed that Liu was looking forward to doing something new.

On the return trip to the village Cao spoke on various topics:

> In the past we were treated badly, but now the communist party is good. We are free from bullying. I never thought that I would be free of bullying…I never thought that I would live to see what I am seeing in China today…If someone like Wen Jiabao came to visit our village I would weave and jump and dance until I was exhausted. I would really make him welcome… In the past we could barely eat meat once a month…When I move into my new place I am going to get a new picture of Deng to hang on the wall….The air has been getting clearer day by day. I can see things much more clearly nowadays.

With the last statement Cao gestured to his forehead to explain that clear air was a metaphor for a clearer mind, a clearing of the pollution he had had in his mind for many years.

7.1.5 Discussion five (D5) on 22 April 2011 from 1.15pm to 2.00pm

Introduction

This discussion took place in Liu's living room. His elderly brother Zhou joined the conversation.

The discussion

The first question was to rank the village on a scale of zero (underdeveloped) to ten (advanced development). Liu gave it a rating of seven and explained:

> The village is still very poor but it is developing really fast. After this development it will be a ten. Nowadays we have no problem eating or with clothing. We can eat enough, wear enough and are beds are fine.

"You have talked a lot about transport and infrastructure. How have these improved the life in the village?" I asked. Liu answered:

> The village used to be very remote. Migrant workers can now go out to work. The local economy has developed as a result of better infrastructure. If you come back in two years it will be much better. Now the living standard is better than Africa. Nowadays Africa is the only poor place in the world. China is now the second in the world.

[The brothers asked several questions about Australia: about the weather, my hometown, what clothes people wear. The elder brother commented that foreigners were very honest and responsible.]

"Did your family landlord classification hinder you in any way?" I asked Liu. Liu responded: "For us it was just a change of power. It had no effect upon me. The only thing was that I did not have enough education in Mao's time."

[At this point the translator explained that the brothers seemed to fear they might get into trouble by talking about their landlord status]

Liu said: “Without Deng’s policy there would be no education. Deng’s policy is all good things.”

The respondent led a tour to the old part of the house, to contrast the housing construction from past to present. Liu pointed to the old house made of mud and straw and said repeatedly, “Goumindang”. He then pointed to the newly constructed section he was living in and said, “Deng.”

7.2 Case analysis

In this case, Liu overwhelmingly discussed the topic of education and its importance for development, but he also defined development as ‘happiness’ (*kaixing*). Cousin Cao offered interesting stories on development—from a historical perspective—in the fourth discussion. The following analysis clarifies how education and happiness were connected to development.

7.2.1 Themes of development

Sphere of development	*Theme of development*
Personal/family	Basic needs and household items (gas, pump water, food, gas stove, fridge) Better income Education (connections, ‘ability’) Social status (power/influence, self-esteem)
Village/Local Government	Fairness and justice (‘relocation of villagers’) Local economy and tourism
Nation	Central government’s policy (economy, education/science and technology) National status (China’s place in the world)

Food security, housing, and household items:

Food security, housing, and household items were related to development, particularly the latter (when talking about newly purchased household items such as the gas stove and fridge, and the ease of access to pump water and gas). On food security, an example was given of how life was better today: only 1 kg of rice per day (for his rich family) to live on in the past, but today there were many types of food (more vegetables) and the grandson drank milk (which “was impossible in the past’). However, the elderly gentleman was generally satisfied with diet and found no need to discuss it excessively. In several discussions the respondent led a tour to the kitchen to explain that new appliances (gas stove and fridge), energy supply (gas) and pump water were about development. It was easy to understand why these items were development in the context his life story as a widower and single father. The ability to cook with ease today brought the respondent much happiness: “Back then I worked in the commune all day. It was hard work every day then I would have to come home and find branches to burn to cook food for my children.” The gas stove

and fridge, and the installation of a gas and water supply were spoken of in great detail (the price it cost for each item and installation costs). Behind the household story was the suggestion that China's economy was getting stronger, and it was for this reason that these household items were possible to have today. The items were again shown discussion four with the conclusion: "the gap between urban and rural is getting smaller." A direct link was being made between household items and China's growing economy. The discussion on household items suggested that development was associated with an easier, worry-free life and the belief that a more equitable distribution of China's wealth was occurring.

Better incomes:

The discussion on income was about national income. It appeared that the respondent did not have a strong desire to earn a better income. As a retiree working part-time to provide small support for his son (medical) and grandchildren (education), income was not a major priority ("I do not need to work"). In earlier discussions, the respondent was working as a gatekeeper in a brick making factory (earning 500 *yuan* per month, AUD75 for 15 working days) but by discussion four he had left that employment without much worry. It was possible that the respondent was content to live on insurance from the land sale, with work considered as something to keep active and social in old age. When discussing employment as an electoral officer the respondent linked it with social connections and status rather than discussing its income benefit. The topic of rising national income was discussed in relation to the grandson, with the suggestion that with a good education and by studying hard the grandson could earn more money today. Although this theme may not have been as strong as others, it was considered that higher national incomes were the result of better education and knowledge in the modern China.

Education:

Education was a very strong theme in this case. It was discussed from historical and spatial perspectives, concerning various levels of society (family, local and nation), and linked with social status and culture. When identify images on 'development', the respondent enthusiastically led a two kilometre walk to a newly built middle school in *Suhe* Township as evidence of the importance placed on education.

It was clear from the moment the respondent started discussing development that education was central. Education was the topic the respondent first raised, and it was supported with a photo session of a recent middle school reunion, and the showing of the grandchildren's education certificates. Other education topics raised included the daughter's high intelligence but failed attempt at university entrance, and the respondents high education hopes for the grandsons. The respondent took another journey down memory lane when discussing how the remoteness of

Tiantang village prevented a good education. However, the discussions revealed that skill to build a house and install the gas oven was deemed education. In discussion two the respondent said that "knowledge is very important" from a political perspective ("when the People's Republic of China was established Mao used all of the intelligent people in his development plans"); for social status ("a good education will raise the status of my grandson", giving him a good job, "power and influence"); and hinted that Confucian values ("study hard and develop" and "knowledge") were an important part of education. The respondent's concept of education involved learning science and technology from advanced nations, and foreign investment was a means by which education could improve China. In discussion three, education was discussed in terms of social connections with classmates: that they were in good government positions and offered respected. In discussion four the respondent again discussed education, but this time as the "ability" to do things—and how knowledge was more important than connections—offering the story of an official selected through good connections under Mao, but found wanting when Deng came to power. It was also mentioned how education had not resulted in class discrimination between former classmates, with the example that when the classmates go out together the wealthier classmates paid for everything.

This case showed that education was important as far as it enabled the respondent to have connections, to undertake small tasks, and to have influence. Higher education was associated with practical business and employment knowledge, and national economy and status (science and technology); and on another level, with social life (societal status perceptions). Education was synonymous with culture in this case, and the respondent ranked cultural development as the most important dimension of development.

Social status:

The theme of social status was a common thread throughout this case and was associated with connections. First, this theme could be found in the respondent's story as a widower and divorcee, both discussed as a lack of status. The difficulty of getting married to the first wife due to her higher status as a Communist Party member was the first example on social status. It was also evident in the disappointment over the divorce to the second wife. Second, the respondent often talked about his landlord family background and how this made life very difficult (suggesting that the 'intelligent' people—the landlord class—were treated badly). Third, 71 year-old Liu regularly talked up status, giving numerous examples of former middle school classmates offering good social connection and respect. It was again found in the discussion on the pride of being related to the manager of the brick factory. Four, when talking on the electoral officer role, the respondent expressed the importance of being selected first and receiving the highest pay (suggesting he was a respected village member), even though the elections held no substance. Five, the respondent

emphasized how vital it was for the grandson to attain a good education for a better social status. Social status was a strong theme in this case: it could be achieved or recovered through education and good family/work/classmate connections; but it was tarnished through past family classification and divorce.

Fairness and justice:

In terms of fairness and justice, the village relocation and election was raised. On the former, the respondent considered that the negotiations were fair and legal because villagers were not permitted to own land. Moreover, it was believed that benefits would follow from relocation because the house was built in the 1950s, and modern housing was expected at the new location (D3). It was also evident that the respondent was pleased about receiving a monthly insurance payment from the sale of his farmland. But while the relocation deal was deemed fair, there was the suspicion that officials were making money from land sales. The respondent was wary of government at times. When asked about what villagers do when faced with oppressive leadership (in the context of talking about the Mao era), obedience and non-aggressiveness were the keys.

On the elections the respondent did not find much fairness, saying "it is all form and no substance", despite being an electoral officer responsible for organising polling booths and counting votes. It was discussed that elections might be fairer if local candidates were able to present campaign policy speeches similar to Western elections. However, it was thought that direct voting for the village leader was a better method than in the past.

According to this case, fairness and justice were connected with social and economic well-being and less with politics. To give two examples: 1) because the respondent expected to improve in wealth out of the relocation, life was deemed fair; and 2) although the election was not free and fair, the respondent did not mind (the elections provided social recognition and status). This assertion is compatible with the ranking exercise in discussion one, where economics was ranked at two, social at three, and politics at four on the scale of importance.

Local economy and tourism:

The local economy was discussed in terms of the impact of *Suhe* tourist town, foreign investment, property development, and employment. It was first discussed by contrasting past with present: the transformation of the economy from the commune system (organised labour units, supply centres, government-owned land, and restricted movement) to the present-day market in terms of greater freedoms (D1). In discussion two, the importance of foreign investment for rural China was discussed because it brought skills and technology, employment and infrastructure.

It was interesting that when asked to take photographs on development, the respondent chose *Suhe* tourist town (rather than *Tiantang* village). In *Suhe*, images selected were new buildings, the

ferry, the temple, and the new school. It was also explained in discussion three that *Suhe* was very good for the village ("the village economy has expanded; it has created employment for the villagers…"). The respondent specifically identified the *Tiantang* street market sellers as the main beneficiaries of *Suhe*'s growth, suggesting that there were more tourists coming to the village market today ("some houses have been used as resort hotels for tourists"). Local economy development was also discussed as improved businesses processes (the better quality of bricks nowadays), and the respondent talked excitedly about the new bus station being built near *Suhe*.

The growing local economy theme continued into discussion four when a luxury housing estate tour in *Siping* County was given (approximately five kilometres from the tourist town). On this tour the respondent (and cousin) attributed its phenomenon to Deng Xiaoping policy more than the local officials' entrepreneurship. The respondent was thrilled in discussion four with the news that *Tiantang* villagers might receive better housing with an opportunity for a business (or leasing space) on the ground floor (all in close proximity to the *Suhe* tourist town and its market) from the relocation.

This case study indicated the importance of local markets for villagers. Development involved the perception that China was improving; the hope and anticipation offered by better housing and a business opportunity was enough to suggest that China was developing. Nevertheless, it was interesting that the respondent did not believe development had occurred in *Tiantang* village because the bricks and mortar of *Fugui* County, which was viewed as development, were outside the village ("development has not yet arrived", but it was believed that it was not far away).

Central government's policy:

The central government and its policies were directly and indirectly discussed throughout this case (Table 5):

Central government policy discussed	*Summary of Respondents Comments*
Economic policy (market system)	The shifting from a commune system to freer markets had improved villagers' lives (D1). For the average villager this brought new public facilities, business and tourism: tourist town, local school, better ferry, factories, local markets, and infrastructure (D2). New metro transport in *Xiguan* CBD was a result of China's growing economy (D4). Deng Xiaoping was credited with China's economic growth; because of his policy (D4)
Hukou System (relaxation of)	*Hukou* System relaxation had allowed villagers to travel widely (in the past "we had to report to work [commune/brigade leader] every day"). This represented spatial freedom but also freedom of choice or freedom from oppression (D1).
Foreign investment	The central government had attracted foreign investment which improved villagers' lives in rural China. There were

	more factories [but not in the respondents village] which brought employment, infrastructure, and science and technology (D2).
"Go West" policy	This policy had benefited the village because *Xiguan* was now expanding, which provided more opportunities. Although eastern areas of China had an advantage, the respondent believed that this policy was reducing regional disadvantage ("In a few years *Xiguan* will be as big as Beijing. Soon there will be a fifth ring road.")
Xiaokang society	The respondent considered China to be a *xiaokang* society today (but not equal with advanced nations yet) (D3)
12th Five-year plan	Cao commented that the Party was good today because it offered social security such as health benefits and insurance for older citizens, with the anticipation that it would improve in the years ahead (D4).
Household Responsibility System	The respondent talked about the introduction of household leasing of farming land for villagers but did not indicate its importance for his daily life)
Village elections	The respondent said that the village election was all form with no substance, but better than in the past when villagers had no vote (D1).
Military expansion ('harmonious society')	This was considered important for the respondent in that it offered safety and security, but it was not equated with world peace (only the defence of the nation). It seemed to have some connection with 'harmonious society'.
Confucian values	Liu said that the government was trying to promote Confucian values which he associated with education and development (D2) and preservation of the family unit (D1).

Table 5 Liu Zhong discussion on central government policy

Many positive changes that the respondents had experienced in the village were attributed to central government policy. The household respondents held the central government's economic planning in very strong trust. They understood central government policy as a major factor of development at the local level (even though their knowledge of policy seemed to be existentially-derived; from the media and village gossip).

National status:

National pride and status was discussed with passion. This was particularly evident in the discussion on the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. The respondent did not like watching sport, but the Olympics was considered a major statement that China was making it on the world stage. The topic of national status also lay behind the discussion on China's greatest dynasty as the Tang Dynasty. It was suggested that the Tang Dynasty's greatest accomplishment was its power and influence in the world ("China was the top nation back then. Other nations were afraid to offend China."). It seemed that China's place in the world was very important for the elderly villager; who longed for China to return to the position it once held, and for it to move rapidly away from—what was described as—the shameful backwardness of its recent history (D2).

7.2.2 Historical perspective

Both respondents often discussed development from a historical perspective. Comparisons were mostly made between the Mao and Deng eras, but some were related to changes within the reform era (since 1978). Table 6 lists the ways that development was discussed over time:

Past	*Present*
Labour organised by commune	Free labour market
Government owned all the land; wages paid for in food and minimal income; no market (just supply centre)	Markets and a sense of land ownership
No freedom of movement (*Hukou* System)	*You can now go wherever you want*
Class struggle (landlord class treated badly)	No class struggle
Remoteness of village (e.g., poor access to school)	Better infrastructure and transportation
Tang dynasty powerful and influential; backwardness and shame for many years	Hopes of being equal or better than other nations
No local school; classes in temple	Government-built primary and middle school in close proximity
Temples not allowed during Mao days	Temples are returning
Bricks made by hand and by clay	Bricks are stronger and made by machine process (heating with coal)
Farmland to produce wheat and rice (under the Household Responsibility System)	Farmland sold for tourism development; compensated with monthly payments
Starvation (causing disability); limited amounts of food	Better food security
Bullying and torture by officials (wanting to escape)	Treated well by officials (the Party); enjoying peace and security
No social security	Social security: health benefits and insurance for older people under the 12th five-year plan
No luxury housing estates	Luxury housing estate
Education not possible under Mao	Education considered important today

Table 6 Historical perspectives in Liu Zhong household

Development was discussed by comparing the old commune system with the modern-day village. The table reflects household changes in the social (e.g. labour laws, freedom of movement, government benefits), political (e.g. personal security, anti-class discrimination), and economic (e.g. the economy, land ownership) dimensions. Distinctions were made between Mao (old system) and Deng (modern) in an old-new dichotomy, but the current administration was sometimes praised too.

7.2.3 Spatial perspective

Numerous geographical comparisons were made: inter-household, inter-village, intra-county, intra-provincial, intra-national (rural-urban and inter-urban), inter-provincial, and international. Table 7 identifies the ways in which the household spatially looked at development (the items and spheres):

Item	*Household/ Village*	*Urban*	*Province*	*China*	*The West*
Poverty	County poorest in area		Gansu & Guilin (poor)		✓
Air quality	✓	Shanghai & Guangdong (poor)			
National status				✓	✓
Traditional Chinese Medicine	✓	✓ (better)			
National economy				✓	✓ (world)
Factories	Village to neighbouring village				
Infrastructure		*Xiguan*/Beijing			
Locality		Shanghai (advantage)	Fujian (advantage)		
Household items	✓ (rural)	✓ (urban)			

Table 7 Spatial perspectives in Liu Zhong household

The table highlights the relativity by which the household viewed development. It suggests that the household thought that development was sometimes happening outside *Tiantang* village ("I do not think development has reached the village"), but on other occasions that *Tiantang* was relatively better off than parts of China. The respondent was confident that development would soon arrive in the village, and this was related to the wider Chinese economy, infrastructure, household items, factories, and national status. *Tiantang* village was perceived as being better than other areas on issues such as poverty and air quality, although it was understood that the village's distance from the eastern seaboard was a disadvantage, but narrowing in development disparities. Household items were evidence that urban-rural development gaps were narrowing. Comparative views of development were important for this household because there was the hope that the tangible benefits of China's development would flow into the life of *Tiantang* village.

7.3 Analysis in relation to the literature review

7.3.1 Western themes of development

The respondent referred to Western theories of development on a few occasions, but did not go into details when doing so. One Western concept raised was democratic elections. Liu suggested that the Western ideal of political candidates giving policy speeches as an election prerequisite was a good one. Apart from this, other concepts were vague. The respondent perceived that Western nations were highly advanced and that China needed to learn the science and technology

of these nations.

7.3.2 Themes of Chinese development

In this household, the central government's role at the village level during the reform era was given prominence. The respondents perceived development as arriving from above, from a national level, and found evidence of this in *Tiantang* village surroundings. Several issues connected with President Hu's Scientific Development Concept ('harmonious society', social welfare, 'Go West', science and technology, *xiaokang*) were raised, so the current central government's policies were in the household stories, amid the praise over the Opening Up policies. However, central government's policies themselves were not the catalyst for rural China's transformation: it was also about the person of Deng Xiaoping, his personality and leadership.

It was hinted that traditional values were associated with power and influence rather than any specific religio-philosophy category (although it was mentioned that studying hard was a traditional Confucian value). Buddhism and Daoism were not discussed as being relevant for development, and the respondent was ambivalent toward temple revival in *Suhe* tourist town. Socialist ideas were not explicitly discussed as development, and the desire to forget the ideas and practices of the Mao era was clear. The days of the commune were underdevelopment and lost years.

7.3.3 Themes of development in Chinese village life

Cultural:

Cultural development was discussed as education and connected with social status. While the respondent indicated that a university education was essential for becoming cultured, culture was also about how people behaved in everyday life (social skills as well as technical knowledge). In this regard, the Confucian ideal of ancestral worship was considered as culture, as a means to family preservation ("respect and protection"). Culture was not directly related to topics like media or festivals, but the respondent viewed these as sources of knowledge. In this household, culture was a way of acquiring good *guanxi*, with the respondent regularly referring to the importance of connections and respect from others in the village. By cultivating good culture it was possible to have power and influence, which was central to the household conceptualisation of development.

Economic:

Economic development was discussed in terms of tangible public infrastructure projects and TVEs (*Suhe* tourist town, luxury housing estates), and the associated opportunities and household

benefits. Foreign investment TVEs (factories) were hypothetically considered as a positive factor for economic development because they could provide employment, skills and knowledge, and growth of the local economy. The aesthetically pleasing buildings of *Suhe* Township (and the luxury housing estate of *Siping* County) were associated with China's integration into the global economy. It was also perceived that China's growth was allowing the respondent's household to acquire more items (gas stove, fridge, water pump). China's economic growth was behind development in the household/village/region.

Social:

Social development was discussed as social status. With a landlord background (and being a widower and divorcee), the case revealed the importance for the respondent to recover status after past effects of class struggle. It was regularly noted that the respondent had many well-connected former classmates and respect from village leaders. This was discussed along with the freedom of movement the respondent enjoyed. In other words, social development was the ability to make better social connections today. Social activities such as government-organised dancing, drinking tea, playing Mah-jong and cards were discussed, but not as being about social development or status.

Political:

This category was first related with the topic of the village election, but respondents gave little credit to local government for political improvements. Political development was later discussed within the framework of central government policy. It was clear that the respondents held caution and distrust toward local level officials, perhaps based on the historical stories of abuse within the village. Corruption was perceived in local government land dealings, but the respondent seemed to accept this as common. Every day village level politics was handled by the household through obedience to officials.

Environmental:

Environmental development was discussed as good air quality. The respondent suggested that good quality air was due to *Tiantang* village's factory-free, tourist-zoned area, and it was viewed as aiding the health and longevity of people in the county.

Spiritual:

There was no concept of the spiritual. Ancestral worship was discussed as culture and tradition, and not as religion. As an atheistic household, there was no such thing as spirituality. Temple revival in *Suhe* was raised, but in relation to tourism and economic development only.

7.4 Conclusion

Education was the core aspect of development in this case. The respondent saw education behind central government policy, the growing national and local economy, the modern buildings and infrastructure in the area, science and technology of the West, Confucian values, and the better life being experiencing in the village today. Education represented development because it had the potential to improve employment prospects, and personal and national status. It gave the individual social status (face): power and influence (connections/recognition) in the world.

Chapter 8 - The Zhou Zhong Household

Classification	*Age*	*Occupation*	*Notes*
Zhou Zhong (Husband)	80	Retired Farmer	Father was a farmer; Lifelong village resident; five children (four daughters 61,58, 53, 48 and one son 45); 34 descendants; married for 60 years; primary school education; married through a go-between
Hua Yulin (Wife)	76	Retired Farmer	Originally from another county; parents died when young; raised by aunt along with four siblings
Qing Zhong (son)	48	Manager-Brick factory	Started work at 16 because of father's illness; member of the CPC; married but no children

8.1The discussions

8.1.1 Discussion one (D1) 27 January 2011 from 11.00am to 12.30 pm

Introduction

Zhou was a very jovial character. This discussion was conducted at the start of the Chinese New Year period. We sat in the household living room for this discussion. For the first half the respondent's friend watched on. Hua joined the conversation midway.

The discussion

The household discussed development as follows:

Political development: I asked Zhou what he thought about possible relocation to another area. The respondent was not pleased about the proposed village relocation:

> Zhou: I am very happy where I am…The detail of the relocation have not been discussed with the villagers...We have not been consulted on the sale of land and relocation…There will be several meetings in the village between now and then. It is still under negotiation…The way that the process will work is that the village leader will talk with the villagers to get their ideas and feelings about the relocation then he will represent the villagers at an official settlement meeting with the real estate company. [It appeared that the land has already been sold to a Shanghai real estate company and the dwellings in the village will be sold at a later date.]

Zhou gave the metaphor of clothing to express feelings about the local government's planned relocation. He turned to the translator and said:

> How would you like it if I asked you to take off your clothes that you like and are perfectly good, and then give you some new clothes to put on which are not as comfortable as the old ones... I want to cooperate with the leaders to ensure that the village looks better, but I also want to receive good compensation if I have to move…I have heard that the company is willing to pay a monthly life insurance to villagers over 50 years of age.

I asked, "Which level of government is more important to you in your daily life, the central or local government?" Zhou explained that they were equally important. "The central government puts the policy in place, and the local government acts. They work together", he said.

Economic development: The topic of income started the discussion on economic development:

> Researcher: Have you been able to increase your income over the years?
>
> Zhou [Nodding with a smile]: Yes, but it can vary from year to year.

When Zhou discussed income he was referring to household income, as he had been retired for several years.

At the start of the discussion (when Zhou's friend was present) they listed the economic benefits of recent times, such as the abolishing of taxation and annual farming incentive payments. They asked about prices in Australia, on items such as a kilogram of rice, cars; and whether farmers in Australia paid taxation.

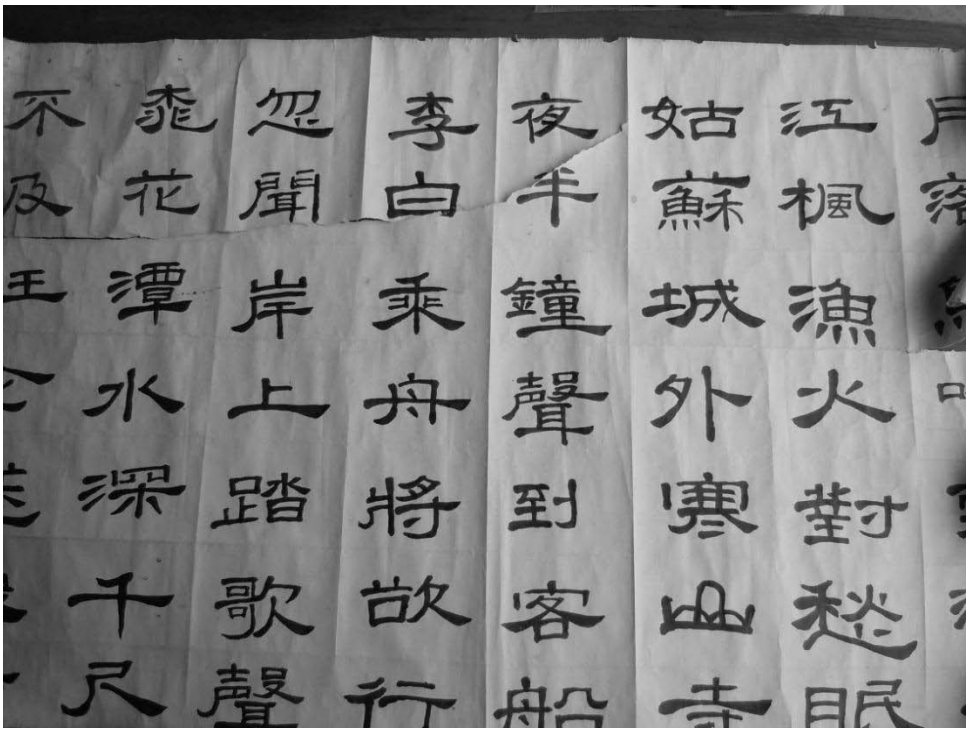
Cultural development: When Hua joined the conversation, Zhou went to get a calligraphy scroll. On the scroll was a poem written by his granddaughter, a sophomore student at a Chongqing university. Zhou explained that the granddaughter did the work when just eleven years old. Zhou's and Hua's had obvious pride in their granddaughter. I asked about the calligraphy, now spread across the table. Zhou explained:

> When our granddaughter was young she entered a calligraphy competition for three years running, and that she won each time…Because of her talent a journalist came to interview her. The reporter asked her why she liked calligraphy to which she replied 'I do not know but if I do not do calligraphy every day I cannot get to sleep at night'.

The elderly couple was delighted in talking about their granddaughter's education so I just listened and seldom interrupted. Zhou continued:

> Under Mao's presidency they thought everyone was the same, had the same ability, but after Deng came to power they started to realise that everyone is different...some are more gifted, diligent, or learn things better under certain conditions.
>
> Hua: If the student is gifted, then the parents do not need to pay a lot of money to educate the child, but if the child does not have the talent to learn it will cost lots of money. Our granddaughter's parents are rich [the father works in a big company and the mother is a government official with good guanxi], but the son is not good at study so it costs them more to educate him than it does their daughter.

I asked whether all their children were educated to which they responded that some were and some were not. "We are an ordinary family and have no special relationships, so we relied on ourselves", Hua commented. "Our granddaughter is very independent. She can rely on herself", she added.



Photograph 8 Zhou and Hua's granddaughter's calligraphy

Spiritual development: Spiritual matters were not really discussed because Zhou had no religious belief. However, he talked about how village leaders came to bless every village household for the coming year during Chinese New Year. It was explained that the blessing was to wish families good fortune and good luck.

Social development: I asked Hua how women's roles had changed in the village over the years. She explained that men and women were equal, and Zhou nodded in agreement. "In what way is it different from the past" I asked. Hua advised that in the past women took care of the home and were not educated, but that today women were well educated and worked.

The elderly couple discussed how the local government looked after senior citizens: by organising events such as the traditional dancing performance taking place outside their home as we spoke. It was also explained that the government looked after the elderly who had no family to care for them." If the elderly have no children to look after them the government will put them into a nursing home and everything will be paid for.....food, clothing". "What else does the government do?" I asked. They added that government care also applied to orphans and the disabled; they too were given nursing care and basic needs.

> Researcher: What else does the local government do for the villagers?
>
> Zhou: Production teams. There are small groups that participate in small projects organised by the local government, such as cleaning the cemetery. For their work the members of the production team get paid small amounts of money. The organizers of the production teams are volunteers, but will get paid with small household items such as soap, towels, or lollies depending on the yearly revenue for all the projects.

Environmental development: Environmental issues were not discussed as Zhou and Hua had to attend a Chinese New Year celebratory lunch at the neighbour's home.

8.1.2 Discussion two (D2) 10 February 2011 from 10.30am to 1.30pm

Introduction

We sat in the living area for discussion two, but later moved to a local restaurant. On this occasion Zhou was making rabbit baskets for sale in the market when I arrived.

The discussion

The topic of Zhou's rabbit cages started the discussion. He said it was just a hobby and that the baskets were sold to rabbit sellers in *Suhe* for one *yuan* each. The translator suggested he might try selling them for two *yuan* each, to which Zhou advised that the market supply was larger than demand.

After the small talk I started with:

> What is development all about for you?
>
> Zhou [without long deliberation and confidently]: Happiness!!
>
> Researcher: Well, what makes you happy then?
>
> Zhou [unhesitatingly talked about what China's development meant for him]: These days I have more clothes, better quality clothes. I am eating better, and I have better accommodation. I don't need to worry about these things anymore [he said with a smile] It was very hard to live in the past. I did not know where these things would come from.
>
> Researcher: Does family have anything to do with development?
>
> Zhou: I am happy that my family can have more things and eat well.

The conversation shifted to village politics:

> Zhou: Not much has changed politically in the village over the years.
>
> Researcher: What about the recent village elections? Another villager said that there is some talk about adopting ideas from Western democracies such as the candidates giving speeches before elections.
>
> Zhou: I am in favour of that. In your country you do not vote for idiots…It is the 'ability' of the leaders that is the most important.
>
> Researcher: Does 'ability' have anything to do with guanxi?
>
> Zhou: *Guanxi* is connected with the leader's ability and skills.

This topic ended with the respondent commenting that a caring nature was a necessary leadership quality.

As we looked out over village scenery from Zhou's house, I pointed to the cemetery across the other side of the river:

> Does that cemetery represent development?
>
> Zhou [then started talking about the cemetery in his village instead of the one across the river]: The cemetery is very important for the villagers. The villagers can get money for having a cemetery in their village. Each person can get 400 *yuan* per year for having a cemetery…The cemetery in this village is collectively owned and it is a big revenue earner for the village.

With many people getting of the village ferry and walking passed his home, I asked the respondent about the village's environment. The first thing that came to Zhou's mind was the river:

> The river is so dirty. There are less fish now than in the past. You cannot even drink the water or wash your clothes in it… They catch the fish by electrocution now, so the small fish get killed off with the large ones. I don't know where the pollution is coming from. It may be coming from the factories further up the river.

Zhou's son then drove into the driveway. Qing worked as a manager in a brick factory in *Siping* County. Zhou explained that Qing made good money from this job because he had three trucks available for rent. The respondent used his son as an example of development. He explained that although Qing did not have a university education he had the ability to be successful in life. "Success" for Zhou was good employment, earning good money.

I invited the respondent and his wife to lunch at a restaurant in *Tiantang* village. Zhou was reluctant to accept this invitation, explaining that he was not wealthy and could not return the favour. The translator explained it was Chinese custom to return favour when offered a gift or invitation. I told the elderly gentleman that listening to his stories would be the perfect gift (or way of reciprocation). Zhou accepted the invitation.

Before we left for the restaurant Zhou led a mini-tour of his home. He listed household items that represented development: pump water, electricity, gas, free cable TV, and the washing machine.

After we sat down for lunch, Zhou, without any prompting, said that Western science and technology was great:

> Researcher: China has a great history of science and technology…Things such as the idea of resonance and the ancient discovery that diabetes was sugar related. What other things?
>
> Zhou: The compass and paper have been universally influential…China needs to learn much from Western countries, but Western countries also need to learn from China.

I threw the theme of Confucianism and development into this discussion.

> Zhou: Confucius' ideas are highly valued today.
>
> Researcher: What are Confucius' values?
>
> Zhou: Having good morals, being obedient, and being humble [he answered emphatically]… Success depends on how hard you work and your ability.

We discussed the differences between Chinese and Australian teaching methods.

> Researcher: Australian teachers tend to teach students how to learn (the strategies of learning) whereas in China it seems that the teacher's role is to impart prescribed knowledge.

Zhou: China's way is better.

Researcher: Why?

Zhou: When we are children we cannot know the Chinese characters, so we need the teacher to show us how.

Researcher: Were there any barriers to development for you as a part of belonging to the landlord class?

Zhou: There used to be fights between the classes but now that does not matter. It all depends on one's ability.

I raised the topic of taxation as Zhou had previously discussed this. He explained that it had been a problem for farmers since the beginning of China's history:

> Farmers were required to give crops to the emperor…This has been no small problem but a very heavy burden that has caused conflicts throughout China's history. [With the thumbs-up gesture and with a smile he then said:] The Chinese Communist Party is good because it has resolved this centuries-old problem.

According to the respondent the abolishing of taxation was the greatest initiative of the CPC.

Researcher: Which dynasty do you consider to be the greatest Chinese dynasty?

Zhou [immediately responding]: Now, because they have abolished taxation.

On the question of whether China's growth was due to communist ideals or Deng Xiaoping, Zhou said that both were important, but added (referring to Deng) that "personality and ability is very important."

I put to the respondent the observation that many villagers liked to compare themselves with others. Zhou then discussed why education was important:

> Zhou: It is important to be educated so that you can keep up with the people around you, or else you will fall behind…First, it is important to have someone in your family who is well educated. This enhances the family's status in the community. Second, it is also important to have a famous person in the village.

I asked for examples of famous people from the village. Zhou explained there was one villager who owned a pharmaceutical factory in the county. "What made him successful?" I asked. "Humble, hard-working" he replied.

We discussed the military:

> Researcher: In other villages that I have been to, some villagers talked about the importance of China's military development in relation to the topic of development. Is that important for you?
>
> Zhou [did not seem to be very interested in this topic]: It is like having a body guard. It makes you feel safe and secure. It is like you coming to the village; you need your translators to watch out for you.

Zhou talked on household income sources. He advised that small craftwork jobs were one source. It was explained that when Zhou worked as a farmer, he also did handicraft work, and his wife helped. Another source came from the children, who gave money each month.

We then spoke on the longevity of people in the county.

> Zhou: *Siping* County is famous in China for the longevity of its people. It is not unusual for people in the county to live beyond one hundred. The poorest person in the village is a gentleman of 112 years.

Researcher: What do you put this down to?

Zhou: I do not know but that there is something special about the place. [It seemed that Zhou was inferring the place is blessed in some mysterious way.] It could be the spring water or the weather.

The couple raised the topic of activities for the village elderly. They mentioned that village leaders sometimes organized bus tours, and that they recently had a trip to a famous Buddhist mountain for 40 *yuan* each.

After lunch the elderly couple showed their farmland plot. On the way we discussed the topic of migration. Zhou commented that most villagers leave to work elsewhere during the year because there was only two farming seasons. I asked whether the urban migrants helped village development to which Zhou responded, "Migration does not help the village much."

8.1.3 Discussion three (D3) 14 February 2011 from 10.15am to 2.15pm

Introduction

This discussion occurred at the front of the house, in the living room, in the courtyard, then in the kitchen. Zhou was again making rabbit baskets, and this time also running a car park business.

The discussion

With the comment that taxation seemed to be an important topic, the respondent talked on its history:

In China's tradition there was a legend of a person called Pangu. Pangu was the creator of the world and since then the people have had to pay taxes to him.

Researcher: Was Pangu considered a god by the people?

Zhou: Pangu is just a legend but that some people consider him to be a god.

Researcher: Do you believe that Pangu is a god?

Zhou: No. When I was young my parents took me to the temple to pray, but that these days very few people believe in religion.

I asked Zhou to rank six dimensions of development in the order of the most important to the least important and to explain the choices. He ranked the dimensions in the following order:

1) Political
2) Social
3) Economic
4) Cultural
5) Spiritual
6) Environmental

The respondent explained the order as follows: "Political development is the most important because it must come first before the others can improve. When politics improves then the social

and economic conditions can improve, which then results in a happier life in the cultural, spiritual and the environment." His ranking of politics as number one prompted the question of how important it was for local leaders to be university-educated. Zhou commented that "it is very important because if they have good knowledge and skills they can accurately implement the central government policies."

I handed Zhou a dozen or so photographs from the last visit. "Could you look through the photographs and select several that represent development, then I would like to discuss how they represent development?" I requested. He selected four photographs and commented as follows:

Business sign (the one that Zhou's granddaughter painted for his small businesses):

> I think her artwork is great. I am pleased to display it to the community.

Photograph 9 Zhou Zhong house (taken from the inside courtyard)

View from his home (cars driving past, people walking off the ferry):

> There are more vehicles, more cars, more people coming here. Across the river is a bus station. People get off at the station and visit *Suhe*.

Inside his home (the internal courtyard):

> With an improved economy, and more money, I have been able to get a bigger home. It is seventeen years old. Before there was only one small room, but now I have a new two-storey house.

Farm plots:

> The crops are still the same as before, but in the past you had to hand in the crops and pay taxes. But now you can consume the produce yourself and sell the remainder in the market. In the past ownership of the land was by the commune, but now you can use it for your own household.

The conversation continued:

> Researcher: Education is another topic you seem to be interested in.
>
> Zhou [gesturing to the sign hanging outside the front of his house (the sign that his granddaughter did for the car park and toilet business)]: The sign is a demonstration of my granddaughter's talent and education. I am very proud to display it outside my house. The sign is about showing the community her artwork as well as attracting some small business.

I sat with Zhou as he watched the car park. The next topic raised was the *Suhe* ancient tourist town in *Fugui* County.

> Zhou: *Suhe* helps the villagers because more people are coming through this village, staying in hotels, and buying things in the street market. I can do my small car park and toilet business.

The small business entrepreneur spoke about the conflict between *Suhe* ancient tourist town government and *Tiantang* village/*Munan* Township.

> The authorities in *Suhe* do not like the *Tiantang* street market. They consider it to be too loud and annoying. *Suhe* authorities want the street market to move, but they cannot do anything about it because it belongs to *Munan* Township.

Another issue of importance was senior benefits. I mentioned that Australian seniors received a seniors' card aged 60, which gave benefits on public services and sometimes private businesses.

> Zhou: In China the aged also get a card which entitles them to benefits as well.
>
> Researcher: What benefits?
>
> Zhou: Health care, and public transport [but Zhou was not confident as he answered the question]. Nobody knows who is going to get sick or need surgery so it is a good insurance for the villagers…The reason for offering benefits for seniors is to reward the elderly for hard work throughout their lives, so that they can enjoy the remaining years of their lives... Women get the benefits at 50 but the men do not get it until they are 60.
>
> Researcher [jokingly]: This does not seem to be equal.
>
> Zhou [smiling and taking it as a joke]: In the old society women were treated badly and they suffered when they were young. We are now trying to compensate the women so that they can enjoy the latter years of their life.

Zhou went inside and returned with Hua, who showed her senior's card.

Another issue close to the respondent's heart was the impending village relocation. I asked Zhou about the advantages and disadvantages of relocating.

> Zhou: It is still under negotiation, but people want to stay close to *Suhe* because of the business opportunities it provides. We do not want to move too far away from the markets.

According to Zhou, the conditions for moving should be that leaders find a place just as good as or better. "Has the planned move affected peoples business or livelihoods?" I asked.

> Zhou: People need to make plans according to the current opportunity, so any plans need to be postponed according to the conditions.
>
> Researcher: What if everyone in the village does not agree?
>
> Zhou: Both sides need to agree. That is the best way. If the relocation deal is good everyone will agree. Even

> if some disagree they will bend to the majority.

We moved into the inner courtyard. The translator and I sat while Zhou caught some fish from the pond. Hua prepared and cleaned the vegetables. They commented that they were self-sufficient when it came to meals. Their son's friend provided fish for the pond and they had plenty of vegetables from the farmland.

We sat in the Zhong's kitchen for lunch. Over lunch we talked on a few more topics starting with 'harmonious society' and *xiaokang.*

> Zhou: *Xiaokang* has a limit. It is about basic needs for everyone; things such as food, clothes and material things. 'Harmonious society' is higher because it involves peace. It is about attitudes towards each other. It has no boundaries or limits. Harmonious society is about peace; *xiaokang* can lead to harmonious society.
>
> Researcher: What are the core Chinese values?
>
> Zhou: It is about the happy life; eating good food [gesturing to the food on the table] and a better life; enough food, enough clothes [said with confidence].
>
> Researcher [turning to Hua]: What do you think development is about?
>
> Hua [gestured in the direction of her husband]: I agree with my husband; that it is about happiness.

During lunch Qing made a brief entrance. He offered a cigarette, which I politely declined, and chatted about work.

> Qing: I am the manager of a brick-making factory…I did not get a university education.
>
> Researcher: What brought you success without having a university education?
>
> Qing: In the modern China one does not need a university education to become successful. Personality and attitude are important for success, for doing well in life.

The couple tried to explain how the land compensation worked.

> Zhou: The land was sold just before the Chinese New Year, and we are both now getting monthly payments of 600 *yuan*. The government sold the farmland to Jiaxiguo for 30,000 *yuan* and then Jiaxiguo purchases insurance for us.

The non-sequitur of these comments suggested that the couple was not sure about the sale of their land, but they were pleased to be receiving the monthly compensation.

> Hua: The 600 per month may increase depending on how well the local economy performs. [In the context of our discussion this equated to development for Zhou and Hua].

After lunch Zhou gave a tour to the village cemetery (about one kilometre away). On the way, we passed land recently purchased by the Jiaxiguo real estate company. The respondent explained that many plots of land were left unused because hardly any money could be made in agriculture. "They [the land owners] make money in other places" he said. At the cemetery I asked "Why are the cemeteries in the county located on a hilltop?" "Your ancestors can watch over the village," he explained. The respondent also advised that the government was encouraging cremation to save space and money.

8.1.4 Discussion four (D4) on 10 March 2011 from 10.50am to 1.00pm

Introduction

The discussion occurred in the living room and the kitchen. During the interview Qing joined for lunch.

The discussion

"*Ni hao* [meaning: hello]," I said, handing Zhou a magazine—"I've brought you a UK car magazine because you were asking about the prices of cars in Australia." We haggled over whether I should stay for lunch. Zhou was very determined that I did.

Flicking through the magazine for several minutes Zhou asked whether there was much pollution in Australia. I said that there was pollution but that there were relatively few people in Australia.

> Researcher: What about in this village?
>
> Zhou: In the past we used a lot of wood to cook food, but now we use gas. Everyone now uses gas. The air quality is clean. Burning with wood used to produce a lot of dust. It is much better for our health nowadays. How long have you had electricity in Australia?

Zhou was distracted by his son returning home. He handed Qing the magazine; Qing handed out cigarettes.

We discussed the progress of the relocation negotiations, between villagers and local government.

> Zhou: I have heard the news that the *Fugui* County had plans to demolish the dwellings in this street.
>
> Researcher: Are you worried about that?
>
> Zhou: No. I am not worried about that. My house is not the only one involved. Many villagers are in this together. The villagers do not want to move. There are no places to rent.

I asked the respondent whether he knew about the central government's twelfth five-year plan, announced in the media over the weekend.

> Zhou: I have not heard anything about it.
>
> Researcher: Why?
>
> Zhou: I am barely interested in the news. I am more interested in doing handicraft. Besides I have a hearing problem and the news can be disturbing for my grandchildren. They have homework to do.
>
> Researcher: The Chinese government is planning to balance exports with a more domestic consumption approach in the next five years, including more imports.
>
> Zhou: They are doing this because we need to learn more about advanced technology…In the West the people never give up on goals whereas in China the people give up half way through tasks. If you don't complete a task in the West your offspring will continue on to complete the task. [I gathered that this comment had something to do with Zhou's family situation].

In previous discussions Zhou defined development as "happiness", so I opened the discussion to its meaning in Chinese. I asked the translator which word the respondent used for happiness (as I

believed there were several) to which Zhou confirmed the word *xingfu.* Zhou explained that happiness was the ability to do what one desired:

> I'll give you an example. My son wanted to buy this car [gesturing to the car parked in the driveway] and he went and bought it. You wanted to come to China so you purchased a ticket and flew here. That is happiness.

We moved into the kitchen. Over lunch most of the discussion was small talk, but I had one final question to ask.

> Researcher: On a scale of zero to ten where zero is underdevelopment and ten is advanced development, where does this village lie?
>
> Zhou: Nine.
>
> Researcher: Why?
>
> Qing [answering on behalf of the father]: Before we could not eat meat every day, but now you can eat whatever you want. [The retired farmer nodded in agreement with his son]
>
> Zhou: We used to burn wood for cooking. We had to collect wood and dry it before we could cook. It was very troublesome to cook.

Qing spoke of how he started work aged sixteen. He explained that his father became very ill forty years ago after an operation, forcing him into work. Qing mentioned he was a Communist Party member, but that it played no part in his appointment as manager of the brick factory.

I thanked Zhou for lunch and said I had to leave. The elderly gentleman explained he had nothing to do in the afternoon and asked whether he could attend the next interview. Walking to the Huang household, Zhou talked about his illness:

> The government implemented a policy of vasectomies for men before the one child policy. I suffered complications after my operation and became bedridden.

Despite this illness Zhou held no resentment toward government.

> It was something that needed to be done, so we did it. No questions asked.

The respondent also advised that *Tiantang* village merged from three into one several years ago.

> Researcher: Where is the third village?
>
> Zhou: Actually, I do not really know much about it. I do not know where the third village is, but the second one is over there [pointing in the direction of the second one on the other side of the main road]. I know a few of the elderly in the second section of the village but I do not know any of the younger generation...The villages were merged because many people have left for the cities, to save on government costs, and because it is easier to administer…There are about three hundred people left in the original village, and less that this in the original second village.

8.1.5 Discussion five (D5) on 15 April 2011 from 10.15am to 11.45am

Introduction

The final discussion took place in the living room. Zhou's cousin Cao joined the discussion mid-way. The respondent's cousin's details were:

Classification	*Age*	*Occupations*	*Background*
Mr. Cao Wei (cousin)	68	Farmer, Cook	Came from landlord class; lived in village from the age of six; suffered torture during Mao era; lived with wife (but living in *Siping* during discussions) and has four daughters (living elsewhere) and one son (Chongqing)

The discussion

Zhou began the conversation with the comment that there was a village policy to allow the elderly the opportunity to travel to Beijing at a cost of 2000 *yuan*. Zhou said he would not go because he needed a guide to take him to places such as Tiananmen Square. Zhou said:

> The policies are getting better and better. With the development we are getting health care insurance. I am doing nothing but I can get 600 *yuan* from the government. I am very satisfied.

Zhou advised he knew nothing about where he would be relocated, but that his son would take care of that.

I began testing items with:

> Researcher: What was the size of the land you were allocated in the 1980s?
>
> Zhou: Five or six fen.
>
> Researcher: Why is your plot smaller than the farmland plots near the main road?
>
> Zhou: We were allocated land based on the population and classification. The rich got less land. It is the same amount of land over there but fewer people. There are more people here, so we have smaller plots.

Zhou then chatted about money. He said:

> It is a good society. If you die you won't get any money. If I live for another 10 years I will have five generations in my family. I will be happy to call you when that happens. If you live you have money, if you die you don't have money. Do you think it's a good society where you have money when you are alive, and then don't have money when you die? In China, if you have money you can go anywhere. If you don't have money it's so hard to move a step.

Next, I enquired as to whether there were any traditional ideas relevant for *Tiantang* village today. The respondent did not understand the question but answered: "Development is because of the leaders. It all depends on the leaders as to whether it is good or bad development…the central government. The central government makes the decisions." "Do you see any traditional values in the leadership?" I asked. "It's about leaders and family. Deng's policies, Deng's wisdom and intelligence," Zhou explained. "What about socialism?" I followed. "It's the way that the Communist party chose to go."

The elderly gentleman compared past and present:

> If we had not had the hard times we would not appreciate what we have today. We would not know what is happy without that experience. The young people today have so much. They have become very materialistic and never had a bitter life before, so they don't appreciate the food and the clothes. In the past no matter whether you had more or not you all got the same food.

[The respondent's cousin arrived on his motor scooter and joined the conversation]

We spoke on migration:

> Researcher: In a previous discussion you said that migration does not help the village. Can you explain what you mean by that?
>
> Zhou: Now we do not have much to do but we need to make a living. The young people just go out to make money. It's good. It helps because you can bring money back to help the family.

Following up a previous statement on the past mistreatment of women:

> Researcher: In our previous discussions you also said that women were treated badly in the past. What did you mean?
>
> Zhou: Women were equal under Mao but were mistreated under the Guomindang. They didn't have any power. Men had all the power. It did not matter what women said.
>
> Cao: Women could not even sit at the same table as men. It did not matter whether they were old or young. Also, women were only referred to by their nickname before they were married, and after they got married they had to use their husband's family name.

For the remainder of the discussion I probed for further information about health care benefits, fished for comparisons, asked about NGOs, and the cemetery. Here are snippets of what was said:

> Zhou: If the government takes your land you have health care insurance, but if you don't have land you don't get any. Everybody can get insurance. If you go to hospital and the fee is above 100*yuan* you can get a 50 per cent rebate, but you are required to go to certain hospitals in *Fugui* or in Sichuan such as *Pinghui* in *Xiguan*...

On comparisons, Zhou said:

> It's all different. The policy is really, really good now.
>
> Cao: One year now is like ten years in the past...

On NGOs, Cao said:

> Nobody dares do that. It's all about the leaders. The Party would never allow that...

On the cemetery, Zhou said:

> There are no other benefits from the cemetery than the 400 *yuan* payment. The payment is for each person connected to the household including children. There are eight people registered with this household.

When I raised the topic of NGOs, Cao explained that *falungong* people had been arrested for doing NGO activity in the past. "They were sticking up posters around the village late at night and they were arrested."

To conclude, I enquired about the emphasis on better food, better clothing and better life in previous conversations, about why this had been possible. Cao jumped in first and said, "Communist Party policy. Deng Xiaoping is the main reason." Zhou added, "Open Door policy. Without that we all would have all died." The discussion dissolved into an argument between the elderly gentlemen as to whether Mao was good or bad.

Later when walking past Zhou's house he pulled me aside to explain that Cao had many relatives

in the Party at the county and provincial level.

[Postscript: On the last day I spent in the village, May 27, Zhou again invited me for lunch and we discussed the issue of democracy and the relocation. On the former, the elderly respondent asked me about what democracy was, and then attempted to justify strongly that each aspect of democracy existed in the village (rule of law—to sue the government in relation to property rights, freedom of speech, right to vote for leaders). On the latter, the respondent said that they would not move at the end of May because the negotiations were at a stalemate. He said that it may happen before the next Chinese New Year. Zhou's great grandson drove me to the airport after lunch and told me that the Zhong family was a wealthy landlord family before the PRC was established, and owned most of the land in the village. The translator also telephoned the household on October 23 to ask about the educational details of the Party Secretary to learn that he was in his forties and did not have a university education: his university education was life, the email noted]

8.2 Case Analysis

The main respondent was the elderly patriarch Zhou, but his wife Hua and their son Qing participated as well. For eighty year-old Zhou, the meaning of development was discussed as capability and "happiness." This case analysis explains how this household conceptualized development as happiness.

8.2.1 Themes of development

Sphere of development	*Theme of development*
Personal/family	Basic needs (food, clothing, shelter) Better incomes Education ('ability') Opportunities (employment and market access)
Village/Local Government	Fairness and justice ('relocation of villagers') The role of the local government ('ability of local officials') Local economy and tourism
Nation	Central government's policy (abolishing agricultural taxation, crop incentives, senior's benefits)

Basic needs:

The topic of basic needs was a very strong theme throughout. It was discussed with comparisons between past hardships and the lack of worry about basic needs in the present. On the meaning of development, the respondent had no hesitation in replying that more clothes—and better quality clothes—along with a better diet and housing were at the heart of development.

> "These days I have more clothes, better quality clothes. I am eating better, and I have better accommodation. I don't need to worry about these things anymore."

Other basic needs that had made life easier included pump water, electricity and gas (D2). When talking about basic needs the key word used was "worry" because the household was no longer concerned: these items had become an ordinary part of family life, which meant the household was freer to pursue higher levels of development today. The household was self-sufficient with daily meals and had easy access to vegetables and fish. Basic needs were equated with the term

xiaokang by which the respondent deemed that the whole of society had enough to survive, and listed such items as "food, clothes, and material things" (D3). It was notable from this list that that the respondent included "material things" which suggested that what may once have been considered 'wants' and luxury items were now basic needs. On *xiaokang*, the respondent explained that once it was achieved 'harmonious society' may result, which meant a better—peaceful—attitude of people in society towards each other. Basic needs were associated with core Chinese values. Chinese values were about "the happy life": "eating good food and a better life; enough food, enough clothes." (D3)

Better incomes:

An increase in income over time was discussed as development in this household. The household head referred to income as the total household income, which came from various sources (adult children, the government, and his small businesses). The son's success as a brick factory manager was discussed in terms of how a lot of money was being earned. It was possible that Qing's income was the main source of household income. In the final discussion the respondent's increasing income was discussed with much excitement (by then receiving the monthly insurance payments from the sale of farmland), but with more caution than in the first discussion, suggesting that income could vary from year to year (and was connected with China's economic growth).

On a personal level, the respondent spoke about earning extra income through craftwork (rabbit cages), and the cark park and toilet business, but the revenue from this was minimal (done more to keep busy and active than as a serious business). In terms of the wider community, the respondent referred to the annual income paid to each village household from the collectively-owned cemetery. It was also suggested that there was little money to be made from farming in the village today, and that some villagers had abandoned farmland to earn higher incomes elsewhere.

Education:

Education was another strong theme throughout. It was equated with an individual's 'ability'—a word emphasized on numerous occasions—and stressed as important at all levels of society; first for family, then for local and central government leadership. An example of the importance this household placed on education was in discussion one, when the elderly couple displayed pride in their granddaughter's ability (showing award-winning calligraphy work and boasting about her university student status). In discussion three, the topic of the granddaughter's calligraphy work was again raised (discussed as the display of her art work on the business sign at the front of the house). On this occasion, the household head linked education with social status as the sign was not merely about education but to do with the household having a well-educated member (no

other family members were discussed to the extent of this granddaughter). The concept of education linked with status was supported in discussion two: “It is important to be educated so that you can keep up with the people around you, or else you will fall behind.”

Another aspect of education (or ability) was that it was not merely about academic knowledge but wisdom (it was not exclusive to higher education). In discussion three, the respondent associated education with success in life when discussing his son’s achievement as a manager (without holding a university qualification), and again in discussion two when speaking on Confucian values (“having good morals, being obedient, and being humble”) as vital for success. In discussion four, the son suggested that a university education was not essential in modern China, but that cultivating a good personality and attitude was.

In discussion three, the respondent spoke about education and ability in relation to local government leaders and their capacity to accurately implement central government policies. It was suggested that it was “very important” for local leaders to have “knowledge and skills." Possessing a good personality and ability was considered critical at the central government level too, and Deng Xiaoping’s personality and ability were associated with China’s economic success as an example.

The household compared education from past to present. This was first done in terms of the empowerment of women’s lives. Women were “better educated” and worked today, whereas in the past lacked education and stayed in the home. It was suggested that China’s education philosophy had changed: that today it was understood as something individuals naturally possessed (“under certain conditions”); whereas during the Mao era it was believed that everyone had the same ability (D1).

The way this household discussed education indicated that it was central to development in its daily life and in Chinese life in general. Education promised increased ability, social status, and financial success.

Opportunities:

The theme of more opportunities for villagers today was evident. Table 8 lists of the types of opportunities discussed in this case study:

Opportunity	*Effect*
Farming plots (Household Responsibility System)	The household had been able to grow its own vegetables: some for consumption and some for sale in the markets.
Education	Women were now able to study and had access to employment, equal opportunities.
Employment	Qing was able to find good employment (without tertiary education) due to increasing opportunities in

	China's market economy.
Small business	The *Fugui* County tourism initiative had attracted more tourists and enabled villagers to sell more products. The respondent gave the example of the opportunity to do his craftwork, and a car park and toilet business.
Markets	China's growing market economy had given villagers incentives to start businesses and earn higher incomes.
Elections	Villagers today appeared to have a choice of who they could vote for as leader. Nevertheless, while the respondent claimed there were no improvements in village politics, he hoped for more electoral reforms.
Farming incentives	The government had offered financial incentives to encourage farmers to grow crops. This gave farmers the opportunity to continue in agriculture, although some had found better opportunities elsewhere.
Urban migration	The respondent commented that migration helped village household incomes, and that it provided opportunities for villagers to pursue better careers elsewhere.

Table 8 Opportunities themes in Zhou Zhong household

Fairness and justice:

Fairness and justice were discussed in relation to the village relocation. It was clear that the household head was not in favour of relocation because the ongoing negotiations were opaque. The respondent's manner when discussing relocation highlighted the uncertainty (and anxiety) felt over the negotiations (spoke about with a lot of passion and angst).

> How would you like it if I asked you to take off your clothes that you like and are perfectly good, and then give you some new clothes to put on which are not as comfortable as the old ones. (D1)

It was later suggested that the respondent was willing to move provided that the new location was "as good or better" (D3). The respondent believed that if the local government's offer was good then everyone would agree, that village consensus would prevail, and if some disagreed they would be required to bend to the majority (D3). It was indicated in discussion three that relocation was not only about the quality of new housing, but also about market access concerns (villagers were currently benefiting from proximity to the *Suhe* tourist town). When it was rumoured that the houses along the main street would be demolished by the end of May (D4), the respondent protested:

> I am not worried about that. My house is not the only one involved. Many villagers are in this together. The villagers do not want to move. There are no places to rent.

It first appeared that the respondent was looking for local government opaqueness demolished with clearer guidelines and processes, but there was more behind the complaints. The indignation was more to do with fears about going backwards in socio-economic status. This assertion can be supported by the way the respondent discussed the election (D2). It was not discussed with

interest or enthusiasm, but in an off-handed way that suggested it made no difference in the life of the village ("not much has changed politically in the village over the years" in D2). In other words, the legality of the election was not that critical. Village leadership and politics were related to whether leaders had the ability and personality to make villagers happy (D3), which the respondent associated with livelihood. Happiness equalled a good livelihood, and it was the leaders that had the responsibility to create a harmonious village culture. Harmonious relationships were more vital to the negotiation process than clear policy and guidelines: "The leader must possess a caring nature" and have the "ability" to accurately implement policy, which in the context of our discussions was about fairness in the relocation negotiation process (D2).

It was suggested that group solidarity would be used to maximize negotiation power in the event of perceived injustice (D4). In this village it appeared that conflict resolution was achieved through traditional Confucian means and not through the law (the concept of filial piety responsibilities between parties).

The role of the local government:

Although this household held a strong trust in the central government, the importance of ability at local level government was evident. On policy implementation, it was considered that a university education was essential for officials, for without knowledge and skills they could not properly make plans happen. The local level government was spoken of as being good at implementing policy and several examples as to what it did for villagers were given: 1) cared for the disabled, orphans, and the elderly without family (offering nursing homes where basic needs were provided (D1); 2) organised production teams for small projects around the village such as cleaning the cemetery (D1); 3) paid 400 *yuan* to each villager per year from the cemetery revenue (D2); 4) organised and paid for senior citizen bus tours (D2); 5) organised cultural events such as the traditional Chinese dancing for the Spring Festival (D1); 6) visited each village household at Spring Festival to give a blessing (D1).

Neither the central government nor local government were perceived as better than the other, the respondent suggesting they were equally important for the village: village development required good coordination between the two. This was supported in a later discussion when "political" was ranked the most important dimension of development; with the explanation that with good coordination between central and local government, good economic and social situations would ensue at village level (D3).

Local economy and tourism:

Although the tourist centre was located in the *Suhe* Township in *Fugui* County, this case suggested it was critical for economic development in *Tiantang* village. The respondent discussed

the *Suhe* ancient tourist town and its value for the village with intensity in discussions three and four. In discussion three when selecting images of 'development' the respondent chose the view from his front door—which had many people walking from the village ferry—and indicated that tourism was good for the village because of the increasing number of tourists passing through. It was indicated that increased tourist numbers had resulted in benefits such as visitors staying in hotels and buying goods in the street market ("I can do my small car park and toilet business").

The importance of *Suhe* tourism was raised again in discussion three when the respondent explained that the villagers, as a part of relocation negotiations, wanted close proximity to the tourist town. In the same discussion, it was remarked that although the *Suhe* Township government was attempting to abolish the *Tiantang* street market, villagers were very determined to maintain it. Access to markets was fundamental to development for the household and *Tiantang* village, and the retired farmer was confident that villager solidarity would preserve this.

Central government policy:

The importance of central government policy was regularly discussed. In particular, it was the abolishing of agricultural taxation several years ago that was the greatest initiative of the central government and the Communist party (these terms were used interchangeably in D2). It was explained that this problem—which "has been no small problem"—went way back to ancient China (D2). The respondent went so far as to suggest that the current leadership was China's greatest 'dynasty' because of this policy (D2). (Although the abolishing of agricultural taxation had not taken effect until after the respondent's retirement, it was likely that the enthusiasm for this policy was to do with the break from—or the defeat of— the harshness of farming days in the commune). Another recent agricultural policy initiative discussed was the financial incentives offered for farming, but the respondent did not explain this in much detail (perhaps because this incentive did not apply to *Tiantang* village in the light of the impending relocation) (D1).

The second central government policy area of importance was senior-related benefits (health care, public transport, insurance). However, respondents spoke vaguely on health care benefits (as some type of insurance), and did not seem to know how the process worked. Senior benefits also included public transport concessions, even though the respondent did not use public transport. It was interesting that the respondent compared senior benefits between China and Australia (D3).

On the topic of seniors' insurance, the elderly couple appeared to speak with much more authority and expression as it was connected with the sale of their land. It was explained that they were receiving 600 *yuan* per month from their land sale, and it was clear that this had brought happiness and security, and the hope that this would increase as the local economy expanded (D3). (This land had been beneficial to the household for meeting daily basic needs (and earning extra income) since the 1980s when Deng Xiaoping introduced the Household Responsibility

System (D3)).

Although the central government's policies were important for the household, not much attention was paid to the finer policy details. When asked about the central government's twelfth five-year plan—which was headline news over the previous weekend—the respondent knew nothing about it (and was not interested) (D4).

Central government policy was useful to the household so far as it impacted life and local context. It was interesting that although national population policy had affected the household head's health—the botched vasectomy that left him seriously ill and bedridden—there was still a strong trust in the central government to govern well (even on the very policy that caused his illness) (D4).

8.2.2 Historical perspective

The elderly respondent often discussed development by comparing past with present. There was the sense within this household of relief that the harshness of past days were behind, and an excitement about the present and what lay ahead. Statements the respondent made about the past were often brief and lacking in detail in contrast to the expressive way the modern times were discussed. When asked whether there were any hindrances to development as the member of a previously classified landlord household, the respondent tersely answered that there were class struggles in the past but not today. On the other hand, when asked to rank the quality of development in the village from zero (underdevelopment) to ten (advanced development) the respondent went into great detail and gave the village a nine: explaining how village life had improved considerably from earlier days.

Table 9 identifies the contrasts made between past and presented:

Past	*Present*
Using wood to cook which was time consuming, burdensome, and caused air pollution and poor health	Using gas to cook is easier, saves time, more enjoyment, better health
Could not eat meat every	Eating better, meat every day
No clothes, borrowed clothes	More clothes, better quality clothes
One small room for family	Bigger house, better accommodation, two stories
Women treated badly	Compensation for women to enjoy the latter years of their lives
Under Mao ability of people perceived as uniform	Under Deng people have different abilities under various conditions
Women took care of the home and were not educated	Women are educated and go to work
Ownership of land by the commune; crops and taxes given to the government	Household plot for growing own crops and selling in the market (no agricultural taxation)

Table 9 Historical perspectives in Zhou Zhong household

By offering historical perspectives, the respondent indicated that his life, and China as a whole, was progressing. It was interesting that the respondent spoke very little about development in terms of the legacy of China's past dynasties, and only about traditional values with a brief reference to the legend of Pangu. This suggests that the household found its meaning of development—in some ways—in an existential, linear fashion.

8.2.3 Spatial perspective

A main feature of this household was the numerous comparisons made. Table 10 lists the topics compared, and indicates the spatial dimension to which they were discussed:

Item	*Household/ Village*	*China*	*Australia*	*The West*
Taxation requirements		✓	✓	
Introduction of electricity	✓		✓	
Price of cars		✓	✓	
Price of rice	✓	✓	✓	
Composition of bread	✓	✓	✓	
Education (teaching)		✓		✓
Science and Technology		✓		✓
Elections	✓			✓
Educated family member	✓	✓		
Attitude (goals and tasks)		✓		✓
Senior's benefits		✓	✓	
Air pollution	✓		✓	
Longevity	✓	✓		

Table 10 Comparisons made in the Zhou Zhong household

Where the household, village and nation stood in relational to others was important in this household. The respondent often discussed China's national status in comparison with other nations to determine personal and household levels of development. On a personal level, hosting lunch was one way of demonstrating that the household was well off.

Although the above list suggests that most comparisons may have been about national status, comparisons made at a household/village level were discussed with more interest. It was apparent that the respondent was often looking for ways to find where life in the household/village was better than elsewhere ('the Chinese way of teaching is better'); on other hand it was perceived that life was better outside *Tiantang* village and therefore ideas for development were sought ('Western science and technology is great'; 'At least you don't vote for idiots'; 'What are the prices of cars in Australia?'; 'Do farmers in Australia pay tax?'). It suggested that the household viewed development relatively; the household/village compared with whatever the respondent came into contact with in daily life.

8.3 Analysis in relation to the literature review

8.3.1 Western theories of development

While showing a keen interest in the West, the household stories did not reveal there were any particular Western influences in *Tiantang* village. There was no discussion about historical interaction between the West and China, but it was important for China to learn about Western science and technology. It was not clear as to what science and technology China should learn from the West (apart from a brief comment that adopting the Western idea of political campaign speeches in village elections would be useful). It was evident foreign influences were understood as contributing significantly to China's booming economy, and that this had improved the local economy, but little detail was given. Nevertheless, it was a trickle-down economic theory that was implicit in the discussions. The household trusted the central government to decide which Western development ideals or theories needed to be embraced.

8.3.2 Themes of Chinese Development

The positive impact of the reform era was evident in this case, but less so for the historical legacies of the socialist revolution and the pre-republic, religio-political traditions.

Regarding traditional Chinese themes, explicit discussions on Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism were few. Only one reference was made to the influence of Confucian ideas in development: good morals, obedience, and humility. There were religio-philosophical ideals discussed such as the legend of the ancient god Pangu, ancestral worship (a Confucian tradition but not said so by respondents), and the practice of village leaders blessing households at Spring Festival time, but these were not significantly meaningful the household's everyday life— merely cultural formalities to be observed or practiced. Nevertheless, although traditional values were not overtly discussed, the case arguably highlights strong Confucian values such as the household head's closer relationship to the son than the four daughters (not talked about at all; only their existence and ages), and trust and obedience (filial piety) toward leaders.

On the socialist revolution, it was discussed as something negative that happened in the past. Mao Zedong was not directly discussed, but it was often explained that life was difficult under the commune system. Deng Xiaoping was discussed as good leader; that made life better.

This household believed that the reform era policies had a large impact in *Tiantang* village. Deng Xiaoping was referred to more than any other leader (no mention was made of Jiang Zemin or Hu Jintao). As a retired farmer, the respondent particularly noted the following reform policies as having have made a significant impact: Household Responsibility System (private 'ownership', incentives, basic needs); (relaxation of the) *Hukou* System (villagers able to migrate for work); the abolishing of taxation (solution to centuries-old problem); farming incentives (to grow more

produce); ‘harmonious society’ (working towards a more peaceful society); and the free market (freedom to trade and make profits).

8.3.3 Themes of development in Chinese village life

Political:

Political development was discussed as the quality of local leadership and the implementation of central government policy. Elections were not of much importance, and neither was the idea of appealing to the rule of law (such as the Organic Laws) to resolve disputes. It was through the traditional way of *guanxi* (connections and power/influence) that this household viewed political development. It was ranked as the most important aspect of development because it was the engine for other dimensions of development.

Social:

Social development was about power/influence in the village community, the individual/household position or place in the village (socio-economic status). The social was discussed as education, health, employment (including opportunities outside the village), business, family and friends, and food (eating good quality food).

Economic:

This household perceived economics in terms of household income (sources of income) and expenditure (the price of things) in a way that it enhanced the life of household members: the household was a mini economy in itself. Included in the topic of economics were government social security, and the income potential of family members. Household items and utilities were also mentioned in relation to economics (washing machine, television, gas, electricity, pump water). The local Town and Village Enterprise was discussed as the main reason behind the expansion of the local economy and it held much importance even though the household did not directly benefit from it.

Cultural:

This study suggested that culture was mainly perceived as formal or higher education rather than the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of everyday life. Culture (education) was considered important because it increased ability, but a university education was not critical for achieving success in life. The household believed that to be educated was to have business acumen and a well cultivated personality. Cultural development was not obviously associated with everyday activity such as trading in the market, playing Mah-jong or cards, or drinking tea; but the household thought that culture existed in the production of rituals at festival time.

Spiritual:

There was no concept of the spiritual dimension in this case. Although the household was involved with religious activities (e.g. ancestral worship at Spring Festival time) it did not believe in the spirit world. Ancestral worship was about tradition and culture.

Environmental:

Environmental development was about reducing pollution, associated with sustainability of the local. This household was particularly concerned about air quality (its impact on health) and the cleanliness of the river (the reduced quantity and quality of marine life).

8.4 Conclusion

This household case study showed that politics was very important in the context of the looming village relocation. It highlighted the importance the relationship between household and local government officials, but that the household trusted the central government more. Social development was ranked highly because the household head had a new sense of freedom and progress after undergoing many hardships during the Mao era. Social was linked with the attainment and quality of basic needs such as food, clothing and housing. Education, spoken of as culture, was the means to social status, but in the modern China it was not the only way. This household identified development as 'happiness' which was better living conditions (food, clothing, housing, and the ability to acquire enough money for these). This was associated with a stronger Chinese economy filtering down into the household economy. Comparisons were often made in daily life to determine the household's social status and level of development.

Chapter 9 - The Huang Household

Name	*Age*	*Occupation*	*Notes*
Ruixin Huang (Husband)	51	Bee farm owner	Zhejiang province (lived in the Hangzhou bay area); travelled to various provinces setting up bee farms and selling honey to local businesses and residents
Huiming Yang (Wife)	45	Bee farm owner	Born in Sichuan but moved to Zhejiang for work; met husband in Zhejiang twenty years ago
Yulai Chu (single/divorced)	30s	Beekeeper	Migrant worker from Guangtong; met Ruixin Huang in Yunnan; travelled with owners as bee keeper
Ruixin and Huiming had two sons: Tutai Huang (25), a security guard at a police station in Zhejiang (failed university entrance exam; getting married soon); and Liyuan Huang (17), a high school student in Chongqing (lived with Huiming's sister)			

9.1 The discussions

9.1.1 Discussion one (D1) 5 March 2011 from 3.00pm to 4.00pm

Introduction

Yulai was the only respondent on this occasion. The discussion took place inside the business owners' tent.

The discussion

I began with:

> Researcher: How long have you been here?
>
> Yulai: Three months
>
> Researcher: How old are you?
>
> Yulai: In my thirties [Yulai didn't want to give his exact age].
>
> Researcher: Do you miss home?
>
> Yulai: Yes

It was difficult to get the conversation going but I continued to look for a topic.

> Researcher: Ever been bitten by one of the bees?
>
> Yulai: Yes [Gesturing to his hands to indicate that his skin swells up when bitten]. I have been bitten many times.
>
> Researcher: So what brought you to this place?
>
> Yulai: I got this job as beekeeper through family connections. My boss and his wife live in this tent and I live in that one [pointing in the direction of the other tent]. They come from Zhejiang and travel around to various provinces selling honey…They have many other honey businesses along the main road.

Researcher: Where are you going next?

Yulai: We will stay here for another month or so, or until all of the honey has been sold.

Researcher: How much can you earn as beekeeper?

Yulai: Several hundred *yuan*.

Researcher: What do you do when you have spare time, in your social time, when you need to relax?

Yulai: Nothing. I don't play Mah-jong or cards. I just watch the bees in my spare time.

Researcher: Do you have any religious belief?

Yulai: Buddhism [said emphatically]

Researcher: What does Buddhism do for you?

Yulai: It helps give me peace…When I am at home in Guangtong I go to the temple, but I do not do it when I am away. I do not go to the temple in the *Suhe* tourist site.

Researcher: Can you tell me any more about your belief?

Yulai: I started to believe in Buddhism when I was young.

Researcher: Do you read any scriptures, and what rules do you need to follow?

Yulai: I prefer to go to the temple than read the scriptures. You cannot believe it all but you cannot ignore it either. It is better to believe than doubt.

Researcher: Can you tell me about your family? What do your parents do for a living?

Yulai: They are both farmers. We are a poor family.

Researcher: Do you have any children?

Yulai: No. I was married for three years then got a divorce.

Researcher: Do you feel that your live is improving today?

Yulai: Yes.

We talked about how diet had improved.

Researcher: What is a typical daily meal?

Yulai [pointing to various items spread about the tent]: Meat [hanging in a plastic bag on the side of the tent], rice, eggs [in cartons under the bed], fruit, and vegetables.

Yulai offered the translator, then me, a sugar cane stick. We both politely declined.

Researcher: How does that compare to what you ate when you were a young boy, back in the 1980s?

Yulai: My family did not eat very well back then. We usually ate grainy wheat and weak porridge. It was not very good for my health. The food I eat today is much more nutritious and healthy.

Researcher: How else do you try to stay healthy?

Yulai: I don't drink, don't smoke, and eat well, but I do not do any exercise.

I tested more items to find stories.

Researcher: What are your plans for the future?

Yulai: I do not want to be a bee keeper forever. I plan to earn some money then go back to my hometown and open a convenience store. I can save 6000 to 7000 *yuan* per year.

Yulai spoke on the business in more detail.

One bottle of honey can sell for twelve *yuan*. [Holding a bottle of honey in his hands] This honey is good quality…The rent for the land is 800 *yuan* per month. My boss pays 50 *yuan* per month for water. [Showing me a sample of the produce] This is pure honey. Some honey producers add extra things into their honey which reduces the quality. We sell honey without adding anything to it.

Researcher: Where do you sell the honey….do you go to the street market [pointing in the direction of the market]?

Yulai: No. We don't need to go to the market. The villagers know that we are here. They come and purchase the honey directly from us. Honey companies and the tourists from *Suhe* also come and directly buy from us.

Researcher: How important is the location?

Yulai: The location is very important. Being so close to *Suhe* we can sell a lot of honey. The relocation of this village does not affect our business.

Researcher: Why do you think that *Suhe* seems to be growing faster than this area?

Yulai: I do not know much about that. I am not from this area. The only problem with the location of this business is that it is close to the main road. The car fumes and the dust are not good for my health.

Researcher: Does that affect the quality of the honey?

Yulai: No. We keep the honey in bottles.

With the details of the business seemingly over, I started a new topic. We covered the topics of *xiaokang* society, media, harmonious society, education, and security:

Researcher: What do you know about *xiaokang*?

Yulai: We are now living in a *xiaokang* society.

Researcher: With all of China's strong economic growth, and with people in, say Shanghai and Beijing having lots of wealth, how do you feel about the distribution of income to rural areas?

Yulai: Yes. I feel very jealous of people in the richer bigger cities. I sometimes ask myself why they can earn lots of money while I am poor…They are smart. They have lots of knowledge and therefore know how to do many things. They have the skills to know how to make good relationships and they have lots of money so they can make more money, but if you are poor you cannot do anything.

Researcher: Why do you think there is such a large disparity? Is it about opportunity? Could poor people be just as intelligent as rich people if given the opportunity?

Yulai: No. They are rich because they are naturally gifted; naturally talented…I only completed a primary school education.

Researcher: What if the local level government offered free adult education, say in learning how to use the internet, would you be interested in that?

Yulai: Yes. The wealthy know how to use a computer. I do not even know how to turn a computer off or on. Even little children at primary school these days know how to use a computer. If I could use the internet I could do some business, make more friends, even perhaps find a wife.

Researcher: Is education still important for you now?

Yulai: Yes. I read books, the newspaper, and watch television to keep up with current events.

Researcher: Do you believe all that you see and read in the media?

Yulai: I don't believe everything. Some of it is propaganda.

Researcher: Is politics important for you?

Yulai: If you know about politics you can avoid making mistakes and getting into trouble.

Researcher: Do you know much about 'harmonious society'?

Yulai: It is about a society that is peaceful, secure, where there are no criminals. There are always some in a society who are bad but most people are good. In the future we will have a society at total peace. It is not just a dream. It can be a reality [said confidently].

Researcher: Do you feel secure in this place?

Yulai: Yes, there is nothing of value here to steal.

To understand Yulai's views about economic development, I began with:

Researcher: Has your income been increasing over the years?

Yulai: Yes.

Researcher: What has that increase in income enabled you to do today that you could not do in the past?

Yulai: In the past I used to see the rich using a mobile phone all the time, but now I own one myself. If I could use a computer I would also like to buy a laptop.

Researcher: What has the mobile phone enabled you to do?

Yulai: It makes it convenient to keep in touch with friends and family. I can get more information from my family and it helps with business.

Researcher: Is it expensive to call home to Yunnan?

Yulai: It is expensive when you go outside of the province where the phone is registered.

I wanted to find out about Yulai's experience as a migrant worker in the village.

Researcher: Did you participate in the village election last December?

Yulai: No. I am not a member.

Researcher: Would you like to join the village and vote?

Yulai: Yes.

Researcher: Why?

Yulai: Although the environment in this village is better than in my hometown the development is not as fast. I like this area because it is flat, unlike my hometown which is very mountainous.

Researcher: Do you feel a part of this village?

Yulai: No. I feel like an outsider [said with a tinge of disappointment].

Researcher: Is it important for you to find a wife now?

Yulai: I would like to meet a nice woman but there is no one here to introduce me. I also am poor. I don't have

a lot of money.

Researcher: What qualities do you look for in a potential wife?

Yulai: It does not matter whether she is rich or poor. She needs to be compatible and capable so that we can do a business together.

As a final question, I asked the bee keeper:

What is your philosophy on life?

Yulai: To earn more money and live a better life.

9.1.2 Discussion two (D2) on 8 March 2011 from 1.50pm to 2.50pm

Introduction

The business owners were home for this discussion, so Yulai did not participate. It took place outside the tent overlooking the bee farm.

The discussion

Ruixin explained a bit about himself:

We are from Zhejiang province. Our village is just outside Hangzhou in the Hangzhou Bay area, close to the newly built bridge.

He showed his national identification card while speaking. I am not sure why he did this, but I glanced at it to be polite and noticed he was born on May 12, 1961.

Researcher: So you are forty-nine years old.

Ruixin: Fifty-one.

Researcher: But it says you were born in 1961 on your card [said with confusion].

Ruixin: In China when we are born we start counting at the age of one when we are born.

Although the mathematics did not add up, I let it pass. It was not worth pursuing. In Chinese calculation Ruixin was almost fifty-one.

I started to test a few themes:

Researcher: Has the abolishing of taxes several years ago helped you in any way?

Ruixin: That policy does not apply to my business, but when we travelled from province to province we used to pay a road tax. Nowadays we do not need to pay this.

Researcher: Does the government assist you to run your business?

Ruixin: I only have two hundred boxes of bees. If you have over five hundred then the government will offer you some compensation.

Ruixin discussed the bee industry as follows:

I have several other farms along the road. I cannot do as well as other people in the industry. You need a lot of money to be successful in this industry. I have a friend in the industry who borrowed a lot of money to start

his business and he is able to do very well.

Researcher: What is preventing you from doing the same? Would you like to get to five hundred boxes?

The respondent answered this question vaguely, about something to do with his financial situation. I did not push this line of questioning.

Researcher: Is it easier to do your business in some villages compared to others?

The respondent did not answer the question directly, but said:

Before we move to a new place I check with the locals to see whether the conditions are good, to see if it is a good location to do business.

Researcher: When you say 'conditions' do you mean whether you can build a good relationship with the government?

Ruixin: No. That doesn't bother me as long as there are flowers for the bees. That is important.

I changed the topic after a pause in conversation.

Researcher: How would you compare this village with your home village in terms of development?

Ruixin: They are not comparable. My village is much richer. There are many people in my village who have over ten million *yuan*, but in this one there are few. In my village we do not play cards or Mah-jong. There are many factories in Zhejiang villages and many migrant workers in those factories come from Sichuan.

Huiming arose from sleep and joined the conversation. As Huiming attended to small tasks in the background, she added:

The land in this village is worth about 30,000 *yuan* per mu, but in Zhejiang the land costs about 300,000 *yuan* per mu.

Huiming gave the translator and I hats specially designed for bee protection. As Huiming worked she offered information about the family. They had two sons. One was twenty-five and getting married soon; the youngest was at high school and lived with Huiming's sister in Chongqing.

After sharing family details, Huiming deferred the conversation to Ruixin.

Researcher: How many years have you been in this industry?

Ruixin: Twenty years [holding up two fingers].

Researcher: Has the business been improving?

Ruixin: Yes.

Researcher: What factors have contributed you becoming better off over the years?

Ruixin: I enlarged the scale of my business.

I searched for more detail:

What about China's economic growth? What has made this possible? Is it Mao, or Deng, or Communist Party policy?

Ruixin [without any doubts said]: It is because of Deng's Opening Up policies, his reform policy.

Researcher: Why is it good for China to join the global economy?

Huiming [joining the conversation again]: It has been good for our business because we can export our product. In China we cannot consume all of our honey produce so we need to export to other countries.

Ruixin then enquired about Australia's honey industry:

Does Australia have a large honey industry?

Researcher: We do.

Ruixin: Is it possible for me to sell honey in Australia?

Researcher: There are Austrade offices connected with the Australian embassies in China. You can ring them and someone will talk with you in Chinese.

Ruixin: I think you need to pay a lot of taxes, and there are many regulations and quality control barriers.

Researcher: Which countries do you export to?

Ruixin: America.

At this point a businessman in an expensive car parked roadside and handed Huiming a business card and cigarettes over the fence. The businessman was attempting to get business for his transport company in *Xiguan*. They exchanged pleasantries and he left. Ruixin left the conversation to work alongside Yulai in the field.

I had the opportunity to speak with Huiming alone. The most obvious question was:

So what has changed for women in China over the past thirty years?

Huiming seemed pleased to be asked this question, and replied:

Women have more of a say these days and are getting stronger. There are women who are doing great in business. It is not good for women to be superior to men; what is good is cooperation between men and women. Equality is important; it is not good for a woman to control a man.

Researcher: Are you concerned that, with China's economic growth, traditional values might be lost or eroded?

Huiming: Sometimes it is good to get rid of traditional values. For example, in the past a lot of attention was paid to boys, but now there is more of a focus on girls. The focus on boys does not exist nowadays. It is equal now.

Researcher: Is it common for families to have more than one child in Zhejiang? [asked cautiously]

Not the slightest bit bothered by this questions Huiming said:

We had to pay for our second son. I sometimes regret having our second child. He was not planned. The cost of raising two children is expensive.

Turning the conversation to economic issues, I asked:

How do you feel about the wealth in the larger cities, when there seems to be many poor in the villages?

Huiming: There are poor people in Zhejiang province especially in the mountainous areas. I have no problem with the wealth in the large cities. There are still poor people in the big cities, and there are rich people in the villages. What matters is the individual effort.

Researcher: You do not need to answer this question if you find it rude, how much money can you earn from your business each month?

Huiming: It's not rude. We calculate our income per year. If our business goes smoothly, in a good year we can earn over 100,000 *yuan*, but the last two years have been bad.

Researcher: Would you consider yourself to be poor or middle class? How do you classify your class?"

Huiming: Somewhere in between those two, but closer to the middle-income group.

Researcher: So what things could you do with your income that you could not do in the past?

Huiming: Our eldest son is getting married soon, so we need to pay 300,000 *yuan* for that. We also had to build a house for our son and future daughter-in-law, and we have to pay 10,000 *yuan* to her parents for the marriage. We also need to support our elderly parents, and support our youngest son with his study.

With the feeling that Huiming misunderstood the question, I asked:

But what things do you have now that you could not have in the past?

Huiming: Of course we can afford to buy more items, but they are unnecessary because of our expenses for our sons and parents.

I wanted to hear Huiming's views on the business.

Researcher: What made you start this business?

Huiming: We liked it at the start but as we get older we don't enjoy it as much, but now we have no other options.

Researcher: What do you like about doing this business?

Huiming: You do not have to be manipulated by anyone. It is better than working in a factory. You have free time. The air quality in the countryside is good. It is also good to be stung by the bees because it helps to protect you from bodily diseases.

Returning from the field the husband rejoined the conversation.

Researcher: Is China a *xiaokang* society now?

Huiming: No, not yet. In Zhejiang it is getting towards *xiaokang*, but across China there are still a lot of poor people.

Ruixin: Are their poor people in Australia?

Researcher: In Australia there is social security.

Ruixin [shaking his head in frustration]: It's never going to happen in China. The government here only cares about rich people, not the poor people.

Researcher: On the weekend the government proposed its twelfth five-year plan which included greater measures for providing social security.

Ruixin did not respond.

Researcher: What about the policy of 'harmonious society'? What's that all about?

Ruixin: In Mao's day there were many thieves, but there are not many today.

Researcher: Is that what harmonious society as all about?

Ruixin did not answer this question.

Researcher: Would it be possible for you to select five images in the village that represent development?

Huiming gestured to the bee farm as an image that represented development.

Researcher: Is there anything else in the village?

Huiming: No.

To conclude, I invited Ruixin, Huiming and Yulai to have lunch in the future.

Researcher: When do you leave?

Huiming: March 27th. You are the foreigner, we are the hosts. We are the ones who should be taking you to lunch.

Having learned how to partake in this ritual, I said:

Researcher: Oh no. It's my treat. I really enjoy listening to your stories. Perhaps I can bring something here next time I visit. [I offered as the middle ground.]

Huiming: Sure. And I will give you both a jar of our honey.

Researcher: Before I go, what makes you proud to be Chinese?

Huiming: In the past we used to be like slaves, but now we are hosts.

9.1.3 Discussion three (D3) on 10 March 2011 from 1.10 pm to 2.10 pm

Introduction

This discussion occurred inside the tent. Huiming lay in bed the entire time. They had visitors from Zhejiang province for part of the interview. Yulai was working in the field, so Ruixin did most of the talking.

The discussion

I started this discussion by giving Ruixin the contact details of the Austrade office in *Xiguan*, as he showed interest in exporting last time. Ruixin asked the translator to translate it into Chinese, and then put it in his pocket.

Huiming [talking to the group]: If we are to export to Australia we would need to 'wrap the honey' [meaning to put it into good packaging] and brand it well.

Ruixin: We sell our honey to a big boss [It seemed that Ruixin had plans to discuss the matter with him.]

The discussion began with the topic of their business as the respondents spoke mostly about this in the previous discussion.

Researcher: Is this location good for doing business? Why did you choose this location?

Ruixin [shaking his head to infer 'no']: This is not a good location. It cost me 60,000 *yuan* to transport my things here, I have paid a lot of money to feed the bees with sugar and flour. It all depends on the weather [pointing to the weather conditions outside the tent].

Researcher: Will you make a profit on your investment?

Huiming [answered from the rear of the tent]: It depends on how the weather is. If it gets sunny soon we can make some honey and then move to another location.

Researcher: Why choose this location then?

Ruixin: We got a good deal with the land owner. We pay 800 *yuan* per month for the land. It is good if you can find a place where you can get a good price for the land.

Researcher: The other day you were saying that you cannot do as well as other people in the honey industry. Can you explain why?

Ruixin: Luck is a factor. It can depend on the weather. Workers are hard to find. The job requires good skills. We pay our worker 700 to 800 *yuan* per month whether he is able to work or not [due to the weather].

Researcher: Can you get a bank loan to assist the business?

Ruixin: We can get a loan but we do not want to. If we expanded the business it would be too hard to control.

Following up a previous comment related to the lack of opportunities, I said:

You previously mentioned that when you first started in the industry that you enjoyed it, but that now it is not as enjoyable and that you had no other options. Why?

Ruixin: We are too old now and we are not well educated.

Huiming [offering support to this from her bed]: This business is easy to run.

Ruixin: Compared with opening a factory it is much easier. With a factory you need to make the product to the exact specification of the model and it all depends upon the buyers; whether they want to buy the product or not. There is always a good demand for honey. You only need to learn technical skills to run this business.

Researcher: If you had other options what would you like to do?

The husband (with wife in support) did not directly answer this hypothetical question, but said:

If we were not doing this business we would have to work as migrant workers in a factory somewhere."

We got onto the topic of religion and life philosophy.

Ruixin: I am a Buddhist; my grandmother was a Christian; and my wife does not hold any belief.

Researcher: What does Buddhism do for you?

The respondent avoided this question. In getting to know Ruixin I noticed he had the art of avoiding, delaying or diverting attention when not wanting to answer a question or when needing time to think, but he did not do this aggressively. On Buddhism he said:

When I am on holidays or for birthdays I go to the temple to pray.

Researcher: Who do you pray to?

The respondent did not answer this question, but said:

I go to the temple to pray for my son's success and for money.

The respondent got a map to show where he lived in Zhejiang. Ruixin also produced his family album to explain a visit to a Buddhist tourist site in Sichuan province. As we looked over the maps and photographs Ruixin commented that he did not go the temple in *Suhe*. "*Suhe* is too big

and the temple is hard to find," he said.

I tried to get the conversation on course after a brief stall.

> Researcher: Does education have anything to do with the success of your business?
>
> Ruixin: It does not help our business. I only went to middle school…Our generation did not have the same opportunities that are available today.
>
> Researcher: Did your oldest son go to university?
>
> Ruixin: No. He did not pass the university entrance exam so he now works as a security guard at a police station in Zhejiang.
>
> Researcher: Do you want your youngest son to go to university?
>
> Huiming: Yes, that would be good. We hope he can do that.

I asked why this was important but the conversation was diverted.

On the subject of the central government's twelfth five-year plan, the respondents were not interested. When I showed a summary of the plan, Ruixin shook his hand to indicate he did not want to talk about it. It seemed that the government held little interest in the respondent's idea of personal or business development.

We next got onto a topic previously discussed with Huiming, that of social changes for women over the past thirty years.

> Researcher: What social changes have men in the villages experienced in the last thirty years?
>
> Ruixin: The changes for women have been good for me because my wife and I can share responsibilities together. We can work together in our business. [The husband got some cheerful support from his wife from the background].

To conclude, I asked Ruixin to rank six dimensions of development on a sheet of paper, and explain why he chose that order. He ranked them as:

1) Cultural
2) Political
3) Economics
4) Social
5) Spiritual
6) Environmental

> Ruixin: Cultural is first because without education it is not possible to do very much. [He then explained why he put environmental last:] The environment is just about keeping your own yard tidy. It does not matter as long as you keep your area clean.

Before I departed the respondent offered the following:

> My business can only grow as far as the Chinese economy grows. It all depends on the economy.

With that I thanked the respondents for their time, for teaching much about village life in China.

Ruixin saw his guests off the property and with a standard Chinese farewell said, "*Manzou*" [meaning: "take care"; literally meaning "slow go"].

9.1.4 Discussion four (D4) on 17/3/11 from 10.30am to 11.50am

Introduction

Ruixin and Huiming were the main respondents. Yulai was busy working. The conversation occurred inside the business owners' tent.

The discussion

Ruixin explained that he gave the Austrade contact details to the boss in *Miantang* (about a one hour drive north of *Xiguan*). He asked about the logistics of exporting to Australia and I repeated what I had already told him: that I am not an expert on that. Ruixin and Huiming explained that they sold two products: honey and royal jelly. As we chatted Huiming prepared two bottles of royal jelly to give to her guests.

> Researcher: How much can you sell one bottle for?
>
> Huiming: It retails for between 200 and 300 *yuan*, but we sell it wholesale for 100 *yuan*.
>
> Researcher: What does it do for you?
>
> Huiming: It strengthens your immune system [pointing to the writing in the bottle to suggest that that is where I can learn about the product]. It tastes very sour.

The label of the bottle read:

Bee Royal Jelly
Improve immune system, build body strength
Make you stay young, protect your skin
Protect cancer/cure cancer, lower blood pressure
Calm your nerves, improve sleeping quality
Improve mental alertness, improve memory quality
Dosage: with empty stomach, twice a day (morning and evening, 5-10 each time).

Next, Ruixin briefly spoke about a new initiative in the industry:

> There is a new pilot program happening in my industry across China. The owners of the farms are driving around in vans selling their honey.
>
> Researcher: Are you going to do this?
>
> Ruixin [with the shake of his head and a wry, somewhat embarrassed smile]: I do not have driver's license. I cannot drive.
>
> Researcher: Can you get one?
>
> Ruixin: No, I am too old now.

We talked again about why they decided to do the business at this location.

Researcher: Did you come here because your wife is from Sichuan?

Ruixin and Huiming: No.

Ruixin: When we were back in Zhejiang, while my wife was decorating our house, I joked with her that we could buy a place in Sichuan. It is difficult to settle down here without a job and no income.

Researcher: Did you know much about this place before you arrived?

Ruixin: Not much! We knew that many people from Zhejiang were working here so we just spoke with them before we came [Huiming nodded in agreement].

Moving the discussion along, I enquired whether the *Suhe* tourist town was good for business.

Ruixin: No. It does not help my business, but it is good for the villagers. It gives them more opportunities to do business.

Ruixin raised the topic of loans by explaining that they could have applied for a government loan when starting the business but it was too troublesome.

You need someone to go guarantee. I would rather borrow money from friends... We do not need to pay road tax when we travel anymore [suggesting that the government does offer some help].

"What are the main factors of development in this village?" I asked.

Ruixin [with an emphatic response]: Development has not arrived here. There is no development here.

Researcher: What will be the cause of development then?

Ruixin: Policy. Some farmers do not want to move but the government demands them to move. So it is the policy that makes the difference.

We spoke about the photograph taken during discussion two, the image of the bee farm.

Researcher: Why does this image represent development? [thinking they were going to talk about their business]

Huiming: There is going to be a relocation program. The land has already been sold. The land represents development.

Researcher: Which government policies do you like the most?

Photograph 10 The Huang's bee farm

I did not get an answer, so I asked:

> What about the one-child policy, is that good?
>
> Huiming: It is a good policy. I regret having a second child.

I regretted asking this question because it evoked some slightly negative feelings.

Having discussed development widely, I asked:

> What is development?
>
> Ruixin: Development is about a better business for me and my wife and it is also about the improvement of the surroundings.

After reminding the respondent that he previously ranked cultural development as the most important dimension of development, I enquired:

> How does cultural development relate to 'having a better business'?
>
> Ruixin: I did not get a good education. If I had a better education I would be doing something else, something better.

The business owners considered that the level of development in *Tiantang* village was an eight out of ten.

> Researcher: On a scale of zero to ten, where zero is underdevelopment and ten is advanced development, where do you rank this village?
>
> Huiming: Eight. The people in the village are always smiling; the people over sixty can get over 600 *yuan* per month for the sale of the land.
>
> Ruixin: The people's lives are getting better; there are more newly built houses; better incomes.

We next discussed ancestors and the afterlife which shifted to traditional Chinese medicine. Ruixin commented that ancestors had no influence in his daily life, adding:

> I am just interested in staying healthy…During festival times we go to the temple to pay homage to ancestors.
>
> Researcher: Where are your departed ancestors now?

Ruixin did not know how to answer this question, so Huiming intuitively said, "Heaven!", as if to put this questioning to rest, but she did not seriously answer the question. Ruixin diverted the conversation by suggesting that I could ask Yulai some questions. Before I spoke with the Yunnanese worker, Ruixin talked on the types of Chinese medicine he used: acupuncture, moxibustion, and foot massage. "We even give Chinese medicine to the bees when they are weak," he explained.

The discussion briefly shifted towards Yulai. In discussion one Yulai said that he read newspapers and books, so I asked: "Why do you like to read?"

With head bowed low and gaze to the ground, Yulai said he did not read. It was evident that Yulai was embarrassed to talk in the presence of the bosses. There were some questions I wanted to ask Yulai, about his future business plans, but was unable to do so, so I just asked him to rank the level of development in *Tiantang* village. Yulai gave it a six or seven, but did explain the ranking. Ruixin was grinning and seemingly mocking Yulai's every response to questions. "He has a very low intelligence," Ruixin said.

I asked Yulai to rank six dimensions of development from the most important to the least important. Yulai ranked the dimensions as:

1) Cultural
2) Political
3) Economics
4) Environmental
5) Spiritual
6) Social

I asked for an explanation.

> Researcher: Why did you put cultural first?
>
> Yulai: I don't know.
>
> Researcher: Why is social last?
>
> Yulai: I don't know.

Yulai left to do some work outside.

The owners talked about Yulai. Huiming started:

> He is a bit slow…. I offered him a contract of 30,000 *yuan* for three years so that he could buy some life insurance so that when he returns home he could have some money for living. But he would not take the advice because he wants to use his money to marry a girl back in his home town.
>
> Researcher: Can he start a business when he returns home?
>
> Huiming: No, he does not have the ability for that.
>
> Ruixin took over from his wife: It is difficult to get workers for our business. China is doing well these days, so it is harder to find people to do his [the beekeeper's] job.
>
> Researcher: How do you train for the beekeeper job?
>
> Ruixin: It is easy. They just sit and watch us work for a while. Anyone can do it. It does not take much skill.

I commented I had heard that people in the eastern provinces considered Sichuan people to be lazy, that they liked too much leisure. Huiming decided to defend her home province:

> The people in Sichuan can be more intelligent. They earn money then they like to enjoy it. Back in Zhejiang too many people just focus on earning more money. They are richer but they do not have time to enjoy their money.
>
> Researcher: What is your philosophy?"
>
> Huiming: We like to earn money and enjoy it too.

Huiming explained her worry about the oldest son, because he did not know what he wanted to do in life. She explained he had had many jobs:

> Our twenty-five year old has had many jobs. He first went to Guangzhou to study in a vocational college. Then he worked with us for six months but did not like it. We then helped him establish a business in *Xiguan* selling bathroom fittings, and he got bored with that, so that only lasted two months. Now he is a security guard in a police station. I don't know how long that is going to last.
>
> Researcher: What are his talents?
>
> Huiming: He had the ability to predict commodity prices before the Global Financial Crisis. He made a great fortune from that.

I thanked Ruixin and Huiming for their generosity and we exchanged contact details. "If you are ever visiting Australia, give me a call," I said. Ruixin responded with the suggestion that the best time to visit them in Zhejiang was September/August when they took a break. Ruixin wanted to take photographs together before I left, and he chose the bee farm as the background. He offered an invitation to *Miantang* the following week (the place where he sold honey to his boss).

9.1.5 Discussion five (D5) on 22 March 2011 from 11.40am to 11.50am

Introduction

The final discussion was very short. Ruixin, Huiming and Yulai were eating lunch. It was conducted inside the tent.

The discussion

I sat down on the squat stool offered and asked Ruixin:

> The last time we spoke you defined development as having a better business and better surroundings. What did you mean by better surroundings?
>
> Ruixin: Better surroundings means to have good weather. If there is good weather then my business can do well," he explained.
>
> Researcher: Do you have a website?
>
> Ruixin [shaking his head]: My boss in Miantang has a website. How well my business goes depends on whether I can keep a good relationship with him.

I said farewell and left.

9.2 Case analysis

There were three participants in this case study but Ruixin was the main respondent. It provided a unique perspective on development because the respondents were not permanent residents of *Tiantang*. The migrant worker, Yulai, also enhanced the uniqueness of this case. Much discussion was about acquiring a better income in the modern China, but education and markets were also common themes throughout. When asked to define development, the business couple said "better business" and "better surroundings". This analysis explains how this definition constituted development.

9.2.1 Themes of development

Sphere of development	*Theme of development*
Personal/family	Education Better business (lower expenses, more markets, environment) Better income Religion (Buddhism) Food security
Village/Local Government	Local governance (relocation policy) Land
Nation	Economic growth Gender equality

Education:

Education was a strong theme with the three participants. Although only primary school educated, the worker spoke on the importance of skills and knowledge to improve life. He believed that intelligence and wealth were due to genetics rather than opportunity, yet was interested in learning computer skills if the opportunity presented. In discussions three and four the business couple indicated that education was very important, lamenting that the reason for their lack of business opportunities was low education. Ruixin chose cultural development as number one and explained that without education it was impossible to achieve anything.

Better business:

Better business was regularly associated with development by the couple. It appeared that a lack

of education had limited the business couple's ability to improve the business. Nevertheless, they thought that business ownership was better than working in, or owning, a factory. It was suggested that business ownership offered more freedom, "more free time" and less "manipulation" from an employer (D2).

Better business was discussed by the businessman in relation to the environment and China's economic growth. On the environment, he said that the business relied heavily on good weather conditions. The respondent was annoyed about the wet weather in discussion three because it prevented work. Regarding the *Tiantang* village location, the businessman explained that it was not a good location because of the weather (rain) and the set up expenses for three months (D2).

Improving the business was very important for the couple. They regularly discussed ways to improve it. One suggestion was to sell honey products from a mobile van, but the businessman did not hold a driver's license. Another way to improve business was to export goods to Australia; even though it appeared that the business owners were accountable to a big boss (and not qualified to undertake such an endeavour). Improved business conditions were explained as follows: "My business can only grow as far as the Chinese economy grows. It all depends upon the economy". While it seemed that the couple was not entirely free to do business (the business being organised from above, D4), the growing Chinese economy had significantly boosted the business over the years.

China's economic growth was attributed to Deng Xiaoping's Opening Up policy (D2). Nevertheless, in discussion two it was suggested that "individual effort" was important for business development (rather than relying on others). The couple had a life philosophy that suggested that a better business was not the main focus of development: that money should also be used to enjoy life and help family (D3, D4). Indeed, in D2 it was indicated that the choice of business was associated with lifestyle: in the countryside the "air is cleaner".

Better income:

The worker first discussed the importance of higher income (D1). It was connected with saving money for a small hometown business, and in conjunction with finding a wife. By having more money the worker could purchase a mobile phone and laptop computer to improve working prospects. The higher income theme was then discussed by the business couple. They had earned more money over the years and used it for improving the business and doing things for family (son's marriage, son's education, son's housing, looking after elderly parents) (D2).

Religion (Buddhism):

Buddhism was discussed in personal terms by the businessman and worker. The worker visited the hometown temple when there, because a Buddhist belief brought peace, but of this belief he

said: “You cannot believe it all but you cannot ignore it either” (D1). Buddhism played a role in the businessman’s life, even though his grandmother was a Christian (D3). However, it appeared that this belief in Buddhism was also not strong. The extent of this belief was to visit Buddhist temples on special occasions to pray for family success (D3). During one discussion the businessman showed photographs of a family visit to Buddhist tourist sites in *Lexing*, Sichuan many years ago, which was indicative of the respondent’s faith practice (D3). In this household, the Buddhist faith was discussed as being more cultural than religious. For the worker it served as a way of cultivating a good attitude; and for the businessman it was for good luck and fortune.

Food security:

Food security emerged as a theme in discussion one when the worker discussed how diet had improved over time. It was discussed as not only as the greater quantity of food, but improved food quality too: “We usually ate grainy wheat and weak porridge… the food I eat today is much more nutritious and healthy.” Interestingly, food security was not a topic raised by the business couple, and this possibly reflected their sound financial position as residents of wealthy Zhejiang province.

Local governance (relocation policy):

In discussion four the business couple spoke on development in terms of the village relocation issue, even though not directly affecting them. It was indicated that in this debate, development was about local government ‘policy’. Policy was whatever the local government deemed it to be: “Some farmers do not want to move but the government demands them to move, so it’s the policy that makes the difference.”

Land:

The businesswoman selected the land on which the business was being conducted as an image of development. She chose the land even though commenting that development was not yet in the village [because the land had not been built on] (D4). Land had the potential for development.

Economic growth:

China’s economic growth was associated with development, and was crucial for business success (D3). It was suggested that economic growth had enabled the business to export products to America, and that it had also allowed the Chinese people to hosts foreigners today (rather serve as slaves, D2). Moreover, economic growth was linked with exports and new markets (the businessman showed a keen interest in the possibility of exporting to Australia in every discussion).

Gender equality:

The topic of the improved lives of women was discussed by the business couple, particularly Huiming. Women's development was about successful business, and equality in terms of cooperation between men and women (D2). It was indicated that traditional values devalued women, and that it was pleasing that the wellbeing of women was receiving more attention today. Nevertheless, the businesswoman added that "it is not good for women to be superior to men". In discussion three, the husband suggested that greater attention to women was welcomed because business responsibilities could be shared with the wife. While the wife discussed gender equality (although the term 'gender equality' was not used) in terms of attitudes, the husband saw it in terms of economics and business.

9.2.2 Historical perspective

Development was not particularly discussed from a historical perspective. It was discussed that food security had improved over time (D1), but the worker made no other historical comparisons. The business couple explained that women's lives had improved, but generally spoke about development in the present.

9.2.3 Spatial perspective

The respondents made spatial comparisons between wealth and lifestyle across provincial China (and between urban and rural China), and the business couple discussed spatial difference within the bee keeping industry. Table 11 identifies how spatial comparisons were made in this case:

Item	*Household/ Village*	*Urban*	*Province*	*China*
Income and wealth disparities	✓	✓	✓ (between provinces)	
Lifestyle			✓ (between provinces)	
Bee keeping industry				✓ (within bee industry)

Table 11 Spatial comparisons in the Huang household

While the worker discussed income disparities between urban and rural China, the business couple discussed income disparities between Zhejiang and Sichuan. In discussion one, the worker raised the fact that he was very "jealous" about wealth in the "bigger cities" compared to rural China, concluding it was because urbanites were smarter: "they have lots of knowledge and therefore know how to do many things." In discussion two, the businessman made a comparison between villages in Sichuan and Zhejiang, noting there were many factories in Zhejiang that employ workers from Sichuan. Many people in the businessman's village had over 10 million *yuan* compared to a few in *Tiantang* village; and that the price of land was 300,000 *yuan* per *mu*

to 30,000 *yuan* per *mu* respectively.

The business couple also compared lifestyles between Zhejiang and Sichuan. In discussion four the businesswoman suggested that Sichuanese liked to enjoy using income, whereas in Zhejiang people were only interested in earning money. This was supported by the businessman with the comment that people from his village did not play cards and Mah-jong, inferring that this was the reason for the wide income disparity (D2). The worker compared his Yunnan province village with *Tiantang* village by saying that the wide open spaces in *Tiantang* were enjoyable compared to the mountainous geography of his hometown.

Differences within the bee keeping industry were also discussed. According to the businessman, the government offered compensation to bee farmers who had over five hundred boxes (the respondent only had two hundred). But the businessman lacked the financial clout to reach five hundred boxes, and indicated an unwillingness to borrow money to achieve this (D2, D3): "I cannot do as well as others in this industry. You need a lot of money to be successful in this industry".

9.3 Analysis in relation to the literature review

9.3.1 Western themes of development

Although the business couple claimed they exported to America and were interested in exploring wider markets, Western themes of development were not evident. Global markets were of interest but perhaps beyond the capability of the business owners. The couple talked about the logistics of exporting which indicated they held an understanding of the ways of foreign businesses. They spoke on quality, packaging and transport requirements for exporting. Other than these comments, Western ideas appeared to not have shaped this household's views on development.

9.3.2 Themes of Chinese development

In terms of a religio-philosophical influence on development the case revealed little. The businessman and worker talked about the influence of Buddhism, but not Confucian or Daoist values. No other traditional values of ancient/imperial China emerged.

Concerning post-imperial China, the businesswoman spoke of Deng Xiaoping as responsible for China's rapid economic growth. Mao, Jiang, and the current administration were not raised.

9.3.3 Themes of development in Chinese village life

Cultural:

Culture was connected with education because without it "it is not possible to do very much" (D3). Education as very important as it provided greater capacity or capability to achieve in this household. Culture was more about being well educated; in technical knowledge, rather than in

ideology or tradition (activities or festivals practiced in everyday life). The migrant worker spoke of educating himself through the media to acquire knowledge of current affairs in China. Each respondent discussed culture/education as a means of achieving better business, and it was rated as the most important dimension of development (even though they mourned lost business opportunities due to a lack of education).

Political:

Political issues were discussed as government policy, even though the respondents had no interest in policy technicalities. The couple raised policies such as the one-child policy, abolishing taxation as having an impact on their lives but did not discuss politics in depth. The businessman suggested that the village relocation was government policy but seemed confused between national government policy and local government planning. It was surprising that in light of the lack of discussion on politics that the businessman rated political development as the second most important dimension of development.

Economics:

Economic development was discussed in two ways: greater incomes and tangible assets. The business couple regularly indicated that their improved personal and business situation today was linked with the rapidly rising national economy. They also perceived an unequal distribution of wealth between regions, but put this down to varying regional attitudes toward work rather than failed economic policy. This household considered buildings and projects as examples of economic development. When discussing *Tiantang* village, the business couple believed that development had not occurred because the farm land was still vacant, yet to be improved with modern buildings.

Social:

Social development was the ability to achieve based on economic status. The wife discussed social development as what income could do for family, whilst the husband discussed social development as business opportunities and relationships within the bee keeping industry. The businesswoman also talked about the One-Child policy and the regrets of having a second child, but although this could be interpreted as social issue, the respondent hinted it was more an economic problem. As an example of the social and economics connection, the businesswoman boasted that people in China today could be hosts rather than slaves. In this case, social development was thought of as capabilities that come with greater prosperity.

Spiritual:

Spiritual development was viewed as personal; something that might influence the respondent's

wellbeing. The respondents' Buddhist faith was the wish for a better life rather than a committed daily practice. The concept of spiritual development was moderate in this household.

Environmental:

Environmental development was discussed in terms of favourable weather conditions for the bee farming business. The environment was referred to as anything that assisted the business such as the availability of flowers for bees. When ranking dimensions of development the businessman ranked the environment last and explained that environmental development was about keeping residential areas clean, which mattered little for development.

Despite the seemingly ambivalent attitude towards environmental development, the businesswoman suggested that an enjoyable aspect of business was working in the countryside with the benefits of good air quality. Environmental development was understood as freedom from air pollution, and its associated benefits.

9.4 Conclusion

The concept of development was strongly connected with business, and there was an association between a good educational background and business opportunities. China's growing economy was directly related with the household's business success. Political development was ranked at number two, which suggested that the household believed that the growing economy was driven not only by culture but also by policy. Culture (or education) was the driving force behind the respondent's view of development (even though the businessman claimed to have low education), as it provided opportunities for business success. For this household, anything that improved the bee farm business was deemed development, but culture was central.

Chapter 10 - The Qi Household

Classification	*Age*	*Occupation*	*Details*
Bo Qi (Husband)	48	Construction worker/hotel business owner/village leader	Village leader (but not a Party member); lifelong village resident; his father and grandfather were Party members; used to be in the military; parents lived in the household every second year (they lived with his brothers family every other second year); middle school education
Cui Yongyun (Wife)	48	Owner of small hotel business	Lifelong village resident; Not a Party member, went to middle school
The couple had a twenty-five year-old daughter , married and lived in the neighbouring town; the daughter had a two year-old daughter			

10.1 The discussions

10.1.1 Discussion one (D1) on 14 December 2010 from 11.00am to 12.00pm

Introduction

The discussion took place in the hotel common area. Cui was hesitant at first but participated nonetheless.

Cui ranked the various dimensions of development in the following order as a result of this discussion:

1) Political
2) Cultural
3) Social
4) Economic
5) Environmental
6) Spiritual

The discussion

The various aspects of development were discussed as follows:

Political development: Cui listed political development as the most important aspect of development and said:

> …everything in the village relies on policy and decision-making…The introduction of elections into the village ten years ago was good because I can now choose whoever is good for the village...Now the villagers vote once every three years, which is a change from the past where the ruling was once every five years.

Cui also said:

> My husband is not a Party member; he was not willing to join…He has been the village leader for ten years.
>
> Researcher: Is it likely that he will be re-elected?
>
> Cui: His chances are good because the people in the village like what he has done.

Cultural development:

> Cui: Because this village is poor there is no culture in the village…There are no activities in the village, but during festival time the elders organise lantern displays.

The discussion turned to the topic of education. Cui remarked that education in the village had been poor, and gave the example that her daughter could only go to middle high school.

> Cui: There are very few high schools in the county and the competition to get into the high schools is fierce.

On her education background, Cui said:

> My husband and I could only go to middle school level. During Mao's leadership there were no high schools in the area.

Cui was concerned about education and suggested this was an area of development that could improve.

When asked whether there were any other aspects of cultural development to discuss, Cui commented that the One-Child policy was good.

Social development: As with other households, Cui was confused about 'social'.

> Researcher: What does the move to the new housing area in a year mean for social development?
>
> Cui: It will not be a problem because although the merging of three villages will take place, each village will stay together in the merge.

The discussion turned to the topic of urban migration. I asked whether this had any effect on social development in the village.

> Cui: Most of the villagers leave to work in *Xiguan*, which is not far away, so it does not cause too much of a problem for families in the village. The workers bring back income for the village. They usually come back to work in the village during the busy harvest time to help on the farms.
>
> Researcher: Would you approve of your daughter going to a large urban area to work.
>
> Cui: Of course! It would be good for her to do this. Young people need to go to urban centres to enrich themselves.

Economic development: On the topic of economic development Cui discussed her hotel business.

> Cui: The business is not going so well because the location is too far away from *Suhe*. At night time there is no street lighting so people cannot find it.
>
> Researcher: Will it possible to establish the hotel business in the new housing area in a year?
>
> Cui: This would be too difficult.
>
> Researcher: Are you happy to be moving in a year?

Cui: The move will be an improvement for our life.

Environmental development: Cui said that the environment was good and gave an example of the excellent village road works, adding that this made it easier for her daughter to come home to visit.

Spiritual development: Cui rated spiritual development as the least important aspect of development.

Cui discussed spiritual development in terms of entertainment. She giggled when the topic was raised, saying:

> It is just like entertainment…Religion is something really only for the elderly in the village. They often go to the temples to pray.
>
> Researcher: What do you mean by religion being entertainment?
>
> Cui: If life is going well for you then entertainment is something that you can afford to do, but if you are poor then you cannot do religion.

Cui was making the connection between religion and tourism, whereby people visited temples to find good luck or fortune.

Under spiritual, Cui also talked about *feng shui*:

> Eighty or ninety per cent of the villagers practice feng shui especially when they are constructing houses. Although my husband builds houses and uses feng shui during the construction process, my family does not really believe in feng shui.

10.1.2 Discussion two (D2) on 15 April 2011 from 3.00pm to 4.30pm

Introduction

Discussion two occurred in the hotel common room. Cui spoke about many topics such as education, the planned tourist development, government, and personal and family history.

The discussion

Walking from the Zhong's house to the respondent's house:

> Researcher: Are you moving at the end of May?
>
> Cui: Yes. What are you doing here? I see you in the village often.
>
> Researcher: I am a student from Australia who wants to learn about development in the daily life of an average village in China. I have come to meet some households, to make friends, and discuss this topic.
>
> Cui: But you are not the same age as her [referring to the 22 year-old student/translator walking with us; suggesting that I could not possibly be a student]. When do you return to your country?
>
> Researcher: At the end of May.

We sat down in the hotel common room and Cui offered green tea. In the initial part of the discussion the entrepreneur offered the following details:

> I have lived in the village all of my life. We did farm work before starting our hotel business… The location of the village is very good…most parts of the village are good for development…It's a good location because it is close to *Xiguan*…The transportation is good and *Xiguan* is a good place. *Xiguan* is the place where you come and you want to stay…We are now getting younger, more responsible officials in the local government; people with a good vision for the community.

For the next section, I asked for details about the *Suhe* ancient tourist town in *Fugui* County (including whether a U.S. company had part ownership of the enterprise as I had read about this in a *Xiguan* foreign expats magazine). Cui chatted about the tourist town, which dovetailed into a discussion about the planned development for *Tiantang* village. It went as follows:

> There are no foreign influences on development in the village…I do not know about [the U.S. company]…*Suhe* belongs to the *Fugui* County government…The development in this village is going to be a co-development with *Suhe*. It is going to be a new ancient village planned by *Siping* County, not *Fugui* County. It is going to be called "Ancient Livable Village"…Jiaxiguo from Shanghai is doing the development. They have purchased a lot of land and are planning a new development. It will not be an extension of *Suhe*…There will be many new business opportunities in the new development...We have a very small business. The new development will help because a lot of people will move here. There will be a bigger market.

As Cui spoke on development in *Tiantang* village, I posed the question of which level of government was more important for the village, the central or local government. The businesswoman responded as follows:

> Development has nothing to do with the central government. It's about the local government. Jiaxiguo is developing a lot of land. Many people from the county, from the mountains, will move to the new place. The company from Shanghai has bought a lot of places.

"Will you run a hotel in the new place" I asked. "If I have a big house I would like to open a more luxurious hotel," Cui said with a smile of hope and expectation.

We next discussed the role of the village leadership, including the role of the village committee and the leadership:

> The committee plays the role of leader…They lead and motivate the people…They act like leaders, do things as a model or sample and the villagers follow…My husband has been a leader for fifteen years. He is retired from the military. He is the leader of one part of nine parts of the village

"Why was the village amalgamated from three into one? Was this because of urban migration?" I asked. "This was done to reduce the cost and size of the government. The government wants to have fewer officials at the lower level. It was not because of migration," Cui explained. "How many people are there in the village?" I questioned. "Between four and five thousand," Cui estimated.

The next discussion block produced supplementary details. Cui commented that traditional values had no relevance for development in the village today. Cui also gave further details about why she thought One-Child policy was good: "It means fewer burdens on your shoulders for the family and government; so you can do the things you want to do and have more time." The respondent gave more detail about the daughter: she lived in *Suhe*, looked after a two year-old daughter, was a stay at home mum, and was married to an architect who lived in Shaanxi and travelled a lot with

his work.

The discussion returned again to the planned village project. Cui explained what she thought would happen as follows:

> The plan of the government is to build the biggest ancient village in South-West China…The local government is attracting all the investment. No money is coming from the central government…They are doing a land exchange: 45 square metres per person for money…They will build a new market/stand for the villagers in place of the street market. The villagers will need to pay [rent] for the stand…We hope to do the hotel again in two years by buying a place with 1000 square metres.

"Why is development happening in the area quickly?" I continued—"Is it because of the central government?" "Yes," the respondent replied, "But I haven't been to the village meetings about policy on development." "Most of the people like and support the development," she added.

"What is the most important factor for development in the village?" I asked. Cui explained that it depended on the individual's age, giving the example that the translator would have a different view from people her age. After some further consideration Cui said, "Education might be the most important factor for development in the village.

The next part of the discussion went in a seemingly disjointed fashion. It began with questions about her business and future prospects. Cui said:

> Business is good because it is close to *Suhe*…You cannot predict the effect of the development because it hasn't happened yet…If *Suhe* wanted to extend to this county the villagers would not be happy…We'll see what happens two years later…When I was ten there were no buses from *Xiguan* to *Suhe*. Boat was the only means and it took a whole day.

The next topic discussed was foreign investment: what type would be good, and what would it do for the villagers? Cui answered:

> Foreign investment is welcome here. Any type of business is good. It is not the right zone for factories. This part is zoned for the tourism industry…If I knew what the best type of business was I would do it myself…My husband can introduce you to people for business. When Mao was in charge we could not do business with foreigners. You would get into trouble.

"Can you remember what it was like to live in this village under Mao?" I asked.

> Cui: I was ten years old when the Cultural Revolution started. It was a hard time to live. We could not eat enough. We were very poor. You could not do business at that time. We did farm work all day long.
>
> Researcher: What was your family's classification?
>
> Cui: Poor peasants.
>
> Researcher: Mao would have been in favour of your family then.
>
> Cui: Overall Mao supported all classes but you could not do business or you would get punished.

The respondent was interested in talking about the Mao days. Cui and I continued the discussion in the direction of education.

> When I was at middle school we only had four subjects: Chinese, mathematics, politics, and history. I didn't study English. The quality of teaching was very bad. I cannot understand English because I never learned it.

Researcher: Did your education give you the skills to run your business?

Cui: I didn't learn anything about it. It was rare for anyone to go to high school. In elementary school they only had two books, Chinese and mathematics, and four at middle school. In middle school we had one day of the week just to do farm work. We didn't learn much.

Researcher: How important is education for the development of the village?

Cui: Very important.

"How would you define development?" I questioned.

Cui: Oh, that is too difficult. It's too big [said with a nervous grin].

I paused, giving her time to think.

Cui: The life standard is improving. Every aspect of life has been improved.

Researcher: What aspects?

Cui: Economy, environment.

Researcher: Health or family?

Cui: All getting better.

"Mah-jong [have anything to do with development]?" I continued, testing for a conversation opener.

Cui: If you go to work you can take time off. If you don't work you can play Mah-jong. It's entertainment, leisure time.

"Spring Festival?" I kept trying.

Cui: It is a time to visit family and relatives, no matter what age you are it is a time to do the same thing to build unity, to unite, the community.

Researcher: Television or media?

Cui: Sure. We didn't have it before.

Researcher: Is it related to your education?

Cui: I can learn new things. Know what is going on outside the village. It's a way to learn about government policy.

We started discussing law and the village: how villagers learned the law. Cui had this to say:

The villagers learn about the law through the newspaper, online, but mainly from the television…The villagers do not know about the Organic Laws. Only the government officials know those…The local government leaders, that is…They don't put up posters in the village. They only talk about this in meetings but this is only once a year. It is not compulsory for villagers to attend.

In the next part of the discussion we talked about the reasons for improved standards of living. The respondent explained that the travel industry had improved in the area and therefore it was easier to make money.

Cui: There are not too many migrant workers from here. Everybody has their own way of making money.

My response was to enquire as to what Cui could do with a higher income today that was not possible in the past.

> Cui: As a farmer you could not do business, only farm work. Now we can go abroad and foreigners can come to China. The Open Door policy is responsible for development in the village.
>
> Researcher: Is there anything worth preserving from the Mao era, in terms of development?
>
> Cui: You could not do anything in Mao's time. Even if you had good ideas you could do nothing.

As a final question I asked the businesswoman whether there had been any improvement for women in the village. Cui enjoyed answering this question. She said:

> It has improved a lot…Women's status is better. Nowadays women are sometimes above men…Mao did some good things at the beginning. When people get old they are not too clear about what is going on…I have never been outside Sichuan province but I have been assured that women in Sichuan have a reputation for being the ones with the power in the whole family…The house stuff is controlled by the woman, but men make the big decisions. Women control the money [smile]…Women did not have a career in the past. Men are physically stronger, that is the only difference [when it comes to work]…Before women could not go outside…The improved status of women started with Mao. In Mao's time men and women became equal."

10.1.3 Discussion three (D3) on 22 April 2011 from 11.00am to 1.20pm

Introduction

This discussion took place in the hotel common area, the back courtyard, and in the dining room. It began with Cui, but Bo took over most of the discussion after returning home twenty minutes in.

The discussion

"During the last discussion you said that development was about an 'improved standard of living," I started—"Can you expand on that?

After an awkward pause Cui said:

> How should I say?
>
> Researcher [trying to encourage Cui]: Is it about more money, more material things, a better education?
>
> Cui: Life is better…eating and living. Life has improved in areas such as eating, accommodation, and clothes. Overall it has all improved but I cannot say in what aspects they have improved.
>
> Researcher: You ranked political development as first. How do these things relate to that?
>
> Cui: Because the policy is better our living standard is improving.

"In the last discussion you also said that education is 'very important' for development. Do you have any examples or illustrations?" I asked.

> Cui [gave a nervous laugh and said]: I am unable to answer this question…Overall education for everybody has improved. There are a lot of college students now.
>
> Researcher: Has education improved your life?

Cui: How do I answer? High school was not as good in my day as elementary school is today.

"You also said that the environment is very important for development. Why?" I continued.

Cui: You are more educated. You answer the question [Cui protested with a laugh].

Cui explained that she needed to finish the cooking and advised the translator that the questions were too difficult. I explained that there were no right or wrong answers, and that I was just looking for stories and opinions based on everyday experiences.

As Cui cooked she said this about the environment:

Accommodation is better. Living conditions are better. Transportation is better. We can now get to *Xiguan* easily.

Researcher: Is there anything that helps or hinders environmental development in the village?

Cui: There is a factory to get rid of all the trash. It makes the village look tidier and cleaner.

Researcher: How has transportation improved village life?

Cui: Transportation is the main reason we can do business.

"Can you tell me about *xiaokang*?" I asked.

Cui: The life now is *xiaokang*. The village is experiencing *xiaokang*.

Researcher: Is it related to development?

After a pause, she said:

It's hard to say. I am not educated enough to answer your question.

Although the respondent seemed reluctant, I cautiously continued with, "Do NGOs have any place concerning development in this village?

Cui: NGOs are gangs [Cui quipped with a frown and the shake of her head]. They are against the government. In our country we do not have NGOs; we are a socialist country. We do not have those violent groups.

I advised Cui that there were NGOs in China and that they did charity and funding-raising for villages, things such buildings and infrastructure work.

Cui: That is not an NGO.

With that comment Cui deferred the discussion to her husband who had just arrived home.

After brief introductions the village leader started talking about the planned village relocation:

Bo: After the relocation the villagers are all going to move to the same location. There will be two types of housing; two and three storey buildings. All the villagers will get a store to do business.

Researcher: Are you going to do your hotel business in the new location?

Bo did not answer this question and instead asked about Australian farming. He commented that the Australian economy was rich, and that farmers must have a lot of land. We discussed our respective national economies, and Bo said the following:

China was not badly affected by the Global Financial Crisis and Sichuan is doing well.

Researcher: What is the main reason for China's growth?

Bo: The economy is going well but I do not know how to answer the question.

Researcher: What things are causing improvement in the village?

The respondent did not answer the question, but said:

Suhe is owned by a private company. *Siping* County is going to give 256 *mu* to expand *Suhe* to make a big tourist centre. This area [the housing area along the river] is going to be part of *Xiguan* in the future.

Researcher: Are the villagers happy with this?

Bo: They are looking forward to it being a part of *Xiguan*. The *Siping* economy is worse than *Fugui*.

Researcher: Will the villagers still live in this area?

Bo: Yes. *Suhe* is too small. People come and go in the same day. The leaders of the village went to Lijiang, Yunnan, to study how an ancient tourist town is done. We want to replicate that here.

Researcher: What is your role as village leader in this?

Bo: Team captain and engineer/architect. We have village meetings to tell villagers about the project.

The conversation shifted to a topic that was close to Bo's heart: the contrast between pre-reform days in the village and the present. I initiated this topic with, "What was life like growing up in this village?" This was what Bo said:

You cannot even imagine. I was born in 1963. When Mao died I was 13 years old. Back then [during Mao's time] we were hungry all day long. We only ate twice a day. My family was classified as middle peasants. The living standard of the different classes was all the same. The only difference was the classification. The life then was not a human's life.

"How did it change in thirty years? What made it turn around?" I probed. The respondent said:

The land reform in 1979 [turned it around. I am a team captain but I am not lying about this. Reform is very good. The people's living standards have improved since then…A man worked a whole day for one *yuan* [before land reform], and that was quite high. You planted your own vegetables and rice; you also bought oil from the government to cook. That wage was also used to buy clothes and daily life products. After the land reform you only needed to spend two months on the farm. The rest of the time you can go out to work somewhere else: migrant work. This happened right after 1979. *Hukou* is not a problem anymore. You can get a certificate to go to another province. Before 1979 everyone had to work on the farm but now you can do your own business.

I raised the topic of Deng Xiaoping, but Bo said he did not know much about Deng's policies. However, the respondent explained Deng's motto: "We are all people and we have different talents. You must do whatever you can do. That is Deng's motto."

Bo initiated the next stage with:

There is part of the village that does not agree with the relocation. They are so satisfied with their current situation that they do not want to change. Some villagers have different values. I try to talk with them to change their thoughts.

Researcher: Is it your job to resolve disputes?

We were invited to the dining room. On the way Bo said, "Men over sixty and women over fifty

receive welfare from the government [as a result of the relocation]."

We had some small talk at the start of lunch. Bo's elderly parents joined but said nothing and left midway. Bo explained that his eighty-five year old father was once village leader. Bo offered homemade *baijiu* (Chinese wine) and spoke about plans for a new hotel:

> I have got 1000 square meters at the new site and plan to open a big hotel. The second floor will be accommodation and the first floor a restaurant. Two years later you can come back and stay in the hotel.

Bo asked about living standards between China and Australia, but I avoided this question. I made a compliment on Chinese cuisine to which Bo said: "I am not familiar with Western food but I think Chinese food is the best." Bo asked whether in Australia there was a fee charged for visiting museums and tourist sites.

> Researcher: What were your school days like?

Shaking his head, Bo said:

> I do not want to talk about it. It is too hard and bitter. You cannot imagine what it was like before 1979. Before the land reform we cannot eat enough and cannot wear enough.

> Researcher: How did you get through it?

After a pause, Bo said:

> Now we have the freedom of speech. Back then I would not dare say anything. Before 1979 a man in his 20s with a strong body worked all day for one *yuan* but one piece of clothing cost four *yuan*; so you needed to work for four days to get that. In that time we only ate twice a day and ate meat once a month. Now we can talk freely. At my [village committee] meetings, when I have any criticism about the government I just say it…I don't mean 'criticise the government' but express my opinion; but before I could not do that. Now I can give advice to the government.

Bo returned to asking questions about Australian farming; such as how much farmers earn, what things farmers produce (rice, beef, pork?)

The respondent discussed his life in more detail, since the beginning of the reform era:

> Deng made a big difference. I joined the military in 1981. There was a big gap between the city and the countryside then. I was in Chongqing then. At that time people in the city looked down on people from the countryside. Things such as the different skin colour. But now the gap between urban and rural is much smaller. I have achieved things through my own effort. I returned from the military and started doing architecture. I made a lot of friends in Chongqing and started from scratch. When I married my wife I had no money. I have a lot of siblings [five] so my parents spent a lot of money on the children. I had a motorcycle in the 1980s. I purchased it for 10,000 *yuan*. I used it for transporting products from the village to *Xiguan*, and I also did some architecture at that time. Before the Open Door policy we [his family] lived in a very small place. We moved three times. When I started my business it was still difficult. I was still bitter about the Mao days.

"Do you give any of the other reform leaders credit for your improved life today?" I interjected. Bo continued:

> I love Deng the best. Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao have just followed Deng. Without Deng we would not have this life today. As a farmer's son, I am super satisfied with the life now. I can sit around and do nothing and still make money, but I still want to work hard for the next generation. No matter what the policy the key is to work hard. To reduce the gap between rich and poor it is about working hard.

“Have there been any Western influences in this village over the years?” I asked. Bo replied:

> What is a good man? It is someone who is responsible for the whole family. In the West we hear that men are not responsible for the family. They go out and play around, and Chinese culture is being influenced by Western culture. In Australia you pay attention to your own thinking.

The topic somehow shifted to our different cultural views on the death penalty. Bo suggested that the death penalty was important in China:

> Gangsters do bad things, so if we do not have the death penalty these people can do whatever they want. If there is no death penalty in China we do not know how many people will be killed. I’ll give you an example. When architecture groups want to do the same project, if someone misses out on a contract, some people will be killed. It’s quite common. It must happen in Australia, too. [I explained that in Australia business is done according to contract law]. No matter how perfect your law system is things will still happen. If we do not have the death penalty the deaths of people in the architecture industry alone would be greater than traffic accidents. For example, if I am doing an architecture project and I do not like the competitors, I can just hire someone to kill them all off if there is no death penalty. Our law system is not as…

“Is there such a thing as heavenly justice?” I enquired. Bo continued:

> For example, my daughter in the second year of middle school was beaten up badly by classmates in school. I went up to the school to beat the boy who beat her. The school came to me and said ‘you shouldn’t have done that. You should have just talked to him and we could have done something like asking the boy to write an essay to put around the school to say how sorry he was.’ I said to the headmaster, ‘why don’t I just beat the boy then I can write an essay to post around the school.’ The headmaster then said, ‘OK, I can understand your point of view.’ There is no heavenly justice. I do not believe in god or supernatural stuff. I do not believe in fate. I believe in my own efforts. If there is a plane flying over you and it drops gold, if you are not working thieves will just take the gold and you do not know what happened. If you believe in religion you cannot divide the good from the bad. What is religion for you? For example, what about my daughter’s example at school. How do we know who is right? How can religion determine this dispute?

“What is harmonious society to you then?” I continued. Bo said: “It is hard to say, hard to talk about.” Turning to the translator Bo said, “You are educated, “What does it mean to you?” The translator replied, “I do not think we are living in a harmonious society.” “I agree with you,” Bo responded. The respondent did not want to talk further about this topic.

“What things should I ask the other villagers about development?” I asked. “Education,” Bo replied—“Most villagers are not well educated and cannot talk about human development.” What is the role of the local government in development?” I continued. “Listen to the central government, follow the central government. We have a plan/document that we have to follow every year.”

As a final question I asked, “Which is China’s greatest dynasty?” “Deng,” Bo said without hesitation. “Did you study history at school? Are you aware of other dynasties: Han, Song, or Tang?” I pressed. “Yes,” Bo answered.

10.1.4 Discussion four (D4) 27 May 2011 from 10.00am to 10.30am

For this meeting the translator had previously arranged an appointment with Cui. Cui had happily agreed to another discussion. When I arrived we sat in the hotel common area but Cui did not want to specifically chat about ‘development’ because she considered the questions too hard. I tried to secure and appointment with her husband only to discover that Bo was away on business.

My next move was to persuade Cui to allow the translator to ask her husband a few questions by phone the following week, but she refused to give her husband's mobile number. We discussed the relocation plans. Cui mentioned that negotiations were on hold, and that the relocation would not happen for a while. She offered an invitation to lunch, but I declined with the reason that I had other households to farewell.

Although this case contains interesting stories about development, it was incomplete. An analysis has not been made for this chapter, but the Qi household stories form a part of the *Tiantang* village case study in Chapters 11 and 12 nevertheless.

Chapter 11 - Results

11.1 Introduction

The previous six chapters offered stories and insights into the meaning of development from the perspective of six households within *Tiantang* village, Sichuan Province. This chapter aims to bring these stories together to provide an interpretation of what development meant as a single village case study.

It first draws together themes of development identified across the households, explains the spatial and historical perspectives on development, and looks at development in *Tiantang* village in relation to the literature. In other words, it explains the levels to which any of the development themes, theories and ideas of the literature review existed in *Tiantang* village narratives.

The structure of this chapter is:

1) *Themes of development*: an identification and interpretation of key themes found across the households. Some key meanings of development are identified in this section such as food security, education, social status, and access to markets, among others. Other themes emerged that explain what development was not such as spirituality, village elections, and NGOs.

2) *Spatial perspectives*: an interpretation on the way that villagers compared items of development with other localities.

3) *Historical perspectives*: an interpretation on the way villagers discussed development from past to present.

4) *Quality of development*: the rankings that villagers made on the quality of development in the village and the ranking rationales.

5) *Western theories of development*: relates villager discussions on Western themes to the literature review.

6) *Chinese themes of development*: relates villager discussions to the literature review.

7) *Dimensions of development in the village*: an identification and interpretation of the ways that villagers discussed the six dimensions of development (political, economic, social, cultural, spiritual, environmental)

11.2 Themes of development

This section identifies the common themes found throughout the household case studies. Table 12

below indicates the strength of threads across the cases by highlighting each theme's significance. Some may not have appeared in some household cases analysis—because they were not necessarily strong—but these themes were included due to the width to which they were discussed and /or their importance. By including them, it becomes easier to understand the levels of meanings in *Tiantang* village. Some themes, such as perceived corruption, clearly do not represent development, but rather hindrances to development. The intention of including hindrances as themes is that by highlighting them (ruling them out), the meaning about what development actually is becomes clearer.

Sphere	Theme	1.Jiang	2.Liu Zhong	3.Sun	4.Zhou Zhong	5.Huang	6. Qi
Personal/family	Food security	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Housing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Clothing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Transportation	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Household goods and services	✓	✓		✓		
	Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Better incomes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Social security	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Gender equality	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Air and water quality	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Health	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Social status		✓	✓	✓		✓
	Urban migration		✓		✓		✓
	Employment conditions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ancestral worship and religion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Village/local government	Village committee elections	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Relocation of villagers (conflict resolution)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Perceived corruption		✓	✓			
	Enterprise and tourism	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Implementation of national policy (good governance)		✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Access to markets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Non-government organisations				✓		✓
Nation	Central government policy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	National leadership	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Economic growth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	International trade and relations	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	National pride (nationalism)	✓	✓		✓		✓

Table 12 Themes of development in *Tiantang* village

✓= Discussed as a significant issue; ✓= Discussed but not as a significant issue

Food security:

Food security was a very important concept of development in *Tiantang* village. It was discussed both widely and in depth across the cases—except within the Huang household; and this may have been because they came from the wealthier Zhejiang province.

It was evident that during the Mao era starvation and death were common. One villager, Cao Wei, revealed that many village women in the commune were disabled due to malnutrition. Under Mao, getting a decent meal and survival became the sole focus of daily life in *Tiantang* village. Many villagers attributed better food conditions today to Deng Xiaoping and the reforms. After Mao, *Siping* County thrived through agricultural strength. Li Sun commented that *Siping* once used to support wealthier *Fugui* County with food, but that this situation had changed after the 1990s when *Suhe* tourist town emerged.

Throughout the discussions, it was common to hear: "In the past we could not eat any meat, but now we can eat meat every day." Liu Zhong mentioned that during the lean commune years his landlord-classified family could only eat one kilogram of rice per day, but that today he could eat many types of food and a variety of vegetables, and that his grandson could drink milk. Zhou Zhong noted that not only was the household eating better and eating more, but that the food quality was better. These stories represented development for villagers because they were no longer worried about their next meal. Today, it was a given that villagers would eat well every day, which enabled them to pursue development levels beyond basic needs. This was cause for much joy across households.

Food security was also associated with social status. It was very important for villagers to have the ability to host lunch guests. In the Huang household, Huiming commented that she was proud to be Chinese, for the ability host a foreigner for lunch rather than being a slave (with the inference that she knew China was in the past). The importance of this was evident across all households. Food security was discussed in a way that suggested it was a conquered barrier that set households free from poverty, and it therefore figured highly in the concept of development in *Tiantang* village.

Housing:

Another strong theme, except in the Huang household, was housing. It was discussed with a mixture of feelings based on the past, present and future. While the Jiang, Sun, Liu Zhong and Zhou Zhong households spoke of better housing today, their experiences of the past and their hopes for future housing were quite different. Of these four households, the Jiang and Liu Zhong households had a more positive outlook on housing than the others did. The Jiangs came from quite a poor background—peasants—whereas the other households had a landlord classification,

so they anticipated better housing conditions. Liu Zhong, retired and a widower, was excited about the prospect of moving into new housing with potentially new business opportunities.

Housing was compared from past to present; and from present to future. Liu took great lengths to contrast the old part of his house (which was made of mud, wood and straw, and crumbling in places) with the new section at the front (which was sturdier and made of concrete, glass and tiles) as an indication of development. Housing was discussed as being of a much better quality today. In another example, Bai Jiang had a twenty year old dwelling that was renovated after the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. In his case, the housing was clearly of lower quality than other households were, and hence the household's openness to the prospect of relocation to newer housing.

The Sun and Zhou Zhong households were reasonably wealthy, with the former owning four three-storey dwellings in the main street, and the latter with a large house hosting several generations of descendants. These two households were pleased with the quality of their housing and were not prepared to move unless being assured of something better (and it appeared they did not think this would be the case). Li Sun stood to lose much from relocation because he had few registered family members in his household (the new allocation of housing was said to be based on a 35 square meter per registered householder exchange rather than a direct floor area equivalent).

Housing was discussed as potential business capital. Liu Zhong's remarked that houses had been turned into tourist hotels rather than just for residential purposes. Nevertheless, housing was discussed mainly in terms of better quality homes, and households spoke about house ownership with pride. Better quality housing, and the prospect of better housing in the future, were connected with personal and household status across the village.

Housing location was discussed with importance. On village relocation, several villagers said that access to markets was a vital part of household livelihoods, and therefore a major condition for relocation.

Clothing:

Better quality clothing was not a widely significant theme in the village but it was discussed at times with passion in the Zhou Zhong household, and the uncompleted Qi household discussions. Bai Jiang and Liu Zhong spoke about it in passing, as something that their households need not worry about today.

Clothing was discussed with basic needs and *xiaokang*. Zhou Zhong spoke about clothing along with other basic needs in association with the concept of *xiaokang*. What Zhou meant was that clothing was a basic need for an 'even' society, and that when such things were satisfied it lead to higher levels such as 'harmonious society' (which was a concept based on attitudes).The elderly

gentleman spoke about having more clothes and better quality clothes today than in the past when his family had to borrow clothes from other families. Because clothing was readily available today, Zhou believed that the younger generation lacked appreciation for it. Bo Qi supported this theme when he spoke of the high value placed on having better clothing today in his lengthy discourse on the past. Bo said, "Before 1979 a man in his twenties with a strong body worked all day for one *yuan*, but one piece of clothing cost four *yuan*; so you needed to work for four days to get that." Bo Qi associated better quality clothing with the general improvement in the village's standard of living. For Bo and Zhou, more clothing and better quality clothing was another example of how basic needs had been met and improved during Deng Xiaoping's reforms.

Transportation:

Transportation was discussed in terms of improved livelihoods. The theme was widely discussed—absent only from the Sun household discussions—but only discussed with real depth in the Jiang and Qi households. It was an important topic in these households because Bai Jiang and Bo Qi required vehicles to conduct business. Li Sun's fruit growing business was within walking distance to his house, so he used an old-fashioned cart to transport produce.

For the Jiang household, owning a motor vehicle was essential for its livelihood. Bai used the vehicle to collect seed and peanut supplies from *Xiguan* from time to time, and to transport goods to local markets on a daily basis. Without the motor vehicle, the Jiang household would have been financially worse off. Bai suggested that one of the reasons for the better life he currently enjoyed was the ease with which he could transport produce, and he contrasted this with the past when he transported goods manually. When taking photographs on 'development', Bai chose the motor vehicle as the first choice, which supports the assertion that it was a prominent concept of development.

In the Qi household, transportation was discussed as the main reason why *Tiantang* villagers were able to do business today. Bo spoke of his motor bike as the catalyst for kick starting a business in the 1980s after the commune's harsh years. Transportation was development for Bo because it enabled a step out of poverty.

Liu Zhong viewed improved public transport as representing a growing China, but did not speak of transport in personal terms other than to indicate that the village was no longer remote and that villagers could travel further today. In the other Zhong household, improved transportation was viewed as the opportunity for a car park business because more tourists using vehicles were visiting the area.

Transportation in *Tiantang* village was development in that it was a tool for improving business. It enabled better connections with people outside the village and served as an important business

asset leading to a better standard of living. It seemed to be more of a practical asset than a symbol of social status.

Household goods and services:

Across the households, household services rather than goods that were discussed as development, except for in the Sun and Qi households. Regarding household services such as gas and water, the Zhong households raised these items as making life much easier.

Liu spoke about this with passion, as past circumstances required that he raise two children alone without gas or a stove; cooking could only begin after scrounging for firewood following a hard day's labour in the commune. The gas and gas stove represented an easier life for Liu, a freedom from burden, and he discussed these, as well as his pump water, as "happiness."

Zhou Zhong explained that gas cooking had replaced firewood, and how this had relieved him of a heavy burden. Zhou also raised the topic of electricity as a village improvement but did not provide detail.

Bai Jiang discussed the gas and gas stove with excitement (choosing the gas stove as an image of 'development'), and the pump water as enabling him to cook and drink tea. The water pump was one of five photographs that Bai chose as an image of development.

In terms of household goods, Zhou Zhong showed items in his house such as television, cable TV, and a washing machine, although not displaying much animation or giving much detail. Other households did not discuss household goods other than to say that television was good for learning about world events.

It may be asserted that the gas, gas stove and pump water were development. These items represented development because they relieved villagers of a burden from toil and made daily life easier. On the other hand, household goods were not deemed development, not specifically raised as improvements in the life of villagers. It may be that household items were now taken for granted.

Education:

Education was a major theme across households. Education during Mao's time was relatively inaccessible and of poor standard. Liu Zhong commented that he travelled 60 kilometres by foot to attend school each week. Every household respondent commented that they only went as far as either primary or middle school and that places for middle school were very competitive. Several respondents questioned the quality of education under Mao, with Li Sun saying that teachers did not care about education, and Cui Yongyun comparing the standard of elementary school today with high school in the past. Liu Zhong noted that although his daughter passed her university

entrance exam, other students with better connections were accepted ahead of her. Many respondents believed that the quality and accessibility of education was better in China today, and they attributed this to Deng Xiaoping's reforms. Some respondents tended to take a veiled swipe at Mao for the lack of education during his leadership, and this was often done by giving elaborate praise to Deng Xiaoping for the education opportunities provided by reforms.

Another theme related to education in *Tiantang* was the social status it potentially provided. This topic was particularly strong in the Zhou Zhong, Liu Zhong and Sun households and to a mid to lower level in the other three.

Zhou stressed the importance of a university-educated family member because they increased household status and helped it from "falling behind". Zhou demonstrated this by proudly displayed a business sign at the front of the house, painted by his university-educated granddaughter using her calligraphy skills. Both Zhou and Hua discussed their granddaughter's calligraphy skills in great detail during our first encounter, as a great source of pride. The couple spoke only of this granddaughter despite having many other grandchildren.

Liu Zhong supported the topic of education as status by eagerly desiring that his grandson would be university-educated. Liu said that a university education could bring his grandson "power and influence". On education-derived status, Liu regularly mentioned how important former classmates from middle school were, emphasizing that they held influential government jobs.

While Li Sun spoke on the potential status that came with a university education, he noted that attitude was just as important as technical knowledge, and gave two stories as an example (about two university graduates whose paths went in different directions because one had a good attitude to village leaders while the other did not). Li believed that education would help his son to become financially independent, but that without an education, life would be very difficult for him.

The Jiang, Sun and Huang households talked about the importance of education in relation to their businesses. These households perceived education as learning business skills on a daily basis. Bai Jiang was not worried about his lack of education, but he acknowledged the importance of learning industry knowledge, and developing skills such as how to treat customers well. These issues were education and development for Bai. Li Sun noted that education was learning business. He considered education as life experience by explaining that he was sent to another province to learn about growing mandarins. Ruixin Huang believed that a lack of education had locked him into a beekeeping business that today he did not enjoy as much as when he started twenty years ago. He felt that an education would have provided better business opportunities. However, Ruixin was constantly looking for ways to learn business.

Education as development was discussed in a variety of ways: 1) as generally having improved in

accessibility and quality at primary, secondary and tertiary levels under Deng reforms; 2) as something that was undertaken to improve business skills; 3) as something that, as a formal university qualification, potentially brought status, power and influence to an individual and household; and 4) as a way to increase business and employment opportunities. Educational improvements were associated with the Deng era. Education was understood as any knowledge or skills that improved the socio-economic position of the individual, family and nation, and not just as formal higher education.

Better incomes:

The cases showed that higher incomes had significantly changed villagers' lives. Better incomes were used to provide a contrast between the Mao era and the reform era. Villagers spoke of how higher incomes allowed them many things today that were not possible under the commune system. The benefits of higher incomes were diverse across the households.

The Jiang household increased its income by starting a peanut and seed business twenty years ago. Bai explained that this business expanded over the years and allowed for a more relaxed life. With a larger income Bai and Ling spoke of having transportation, household goods and services, a better diet, clothing and housing. Bai commented that it enabled him to give financial support to his adult children.

Liu Zhong did not discuss income in personal terms other than that he worked part-time in a brick factory to support his son's medical costs and his grandson's education. Liu appeared to be more interested in higher incomes in China as a whole, indicating that it was today easier for students to enter the job market with a bigger salary. He also believed that Confucius taught people to study hard and develop, and that this was about earning more money. Liu suggested that with more foreign investment in China, it could create more jobs and fund better infrastructure.

Li Sun increased his wealth over the years by leasing a large land area to grow fruit, which he exported to Russia and sold in local markets. Although Li claimed he was not wealthy, he owned four houses in the main street. He was one of the more wealthy villagers. Li believed that if he was not able to continue growing fruit, he was financially secure enough to start another business. The fruit grower noted a second source of household income as his wife's Mah-jong business, which she ran from home. Extra income enabled his wife to live a more relaxed life by not worrying over daily necessities. Li indicated two other benefits of increased wealth. First, it enabled him to support his son's education. Second, it gave him a better social standing in the village because he now had ability to help others.

With a larger income since commune days, Zhou Zhong had been able to build a bigger house seventeen years ago. Zhou equated increased income with a growing Chinese economy, calling

China a good society because when "you have money you can go anywhere." The elderly gentleman also associated income with migration, suggesting that migration was good because it increased household income.

The Huang household from Zhejiang indicated that a better income enabled them to pay wedding costs for their son, support elderly parents, and support their youngest son's education. They could not afford to buy more items because of these expenses. Their philosophy concerning money was a balanced lifestyle: they were able to earn more money but liked to enjoy it too, as opposed to just working hard to earn more money. The migrant worker from Yunnan, Yulai Chu, spoke of a larger income but resented the unequal distribution of income between the urban rich and the rural poor. Yulai still considered China to be a *xiaokang* society. Yulai said that better income had allowed the purchase of a mobile phone to keep in contact with friends and family.

In the Qi household, Bo and Cui spoke about how they worked hard to shift from a farming lifestyle under Mao to business people during the reforms. Bo could earn enough income today without working, but wanted to work hard for the next generation. Bo believed that by working hard the income gap between rural and urban would be reduced. Bo and Cui indicated that in two years they planned to open a much larger hotel and run a restaurant from that hotel.

Higher incomes in the village improved villagers' lives in many ways since the commune days. Most stories were rags to riches as the Mao era had left villagers with very little. In these stories, we find that villagers' capabilities had expanded and that the reforms had awoken a creative and entrepreneurial spirit that lay dormant for years. Better incomes had not only helped meet basic needs and material items, but they provided incentive, self-esteem and psychological well-being. Increased wealth and income was a core theme in the development story of this Chinese village.

Social security:

The topic of government social security was discussed as a theme of development, but as a relatively new initiative, it was not really understood. During discussions the terms 'life insurance', 'compensation' and 'pension' were used interchangeably, but respondents could not explain social security other than to say that women over fifty and men over sixty would get 600 *yuan* per month in conjunction with relocation land sales. Just before the Chinese New Year break in February, village land had been sold and households were happy about receiving new monthly payments. Zhou said, "I am doing nothing but I can get 600 *yuan* from the government. I am very satisfied." He said that the monthly amount could increase depending on future growth of the local economy. Bai Jiang, who at fifty-five was not yet eligible for the pension, commented that the social security payment was good for his generation but not for the next because they did not have land to sell. Cao Wei also expressed pleasure about the prospect of better social security measures in the government's twelfth five-year plan, even though not knowing the details. The

topic of social security was not discussed in the Sun household, where Li Sun stood to lose much wealth in the relocation. Nevertheless, social security represented development for most households because it increased household income, even though household land had been forfeited to attain it.

Gender equality:

The topic of equality between men and women was a moderate theme across households. It was acknowledge by several respondents that life for women in *Tiantang* village had been unjust, although in the Cao Wei story it had been rather unfair as well (so injustice may have been based on class rather than gender). Cui Yongyun spoke most on women's issues, and suggested that the improvement of women's status in China began with Mao. The discussion about the lives of women in *Tiantang* village revealed that they had been disadvantage in terms of nutrition, free speech, choice of husband, access to education, social mobility and receiving respect as equals. Zhou Zhong said that women were treated equally under Mao and poorly under the Guomindang but provided no details.

The five women who spoke on women's issues mostly agreed that life had improved. Cui said that today women had a higher status than men in some instances (and that this may be a Sichuan province phenomenon); Hua commented that women today had a better education and working life; and Huiming said that more attention was today being paid to girls, and that it was a good departure from traditional values. Zong, although not a *Tiantang* village native, indicated that as a qualified accountant it was easier to have an urban career and children (with maternity leave options). Huiming said that women today were getting stronger in terms of the ability to express opinions and that many were doing well in business, but that it was not good for women to be superior to men. Huiming's concept of equality was attitudinal and based on cooperation. Ling Hua said that nothing much had changed ("it's still the same") but did not elaborate on this.

Male respondents agreed that women had been treated poorly. Zhou believed that women today were being compensated for past wrongs through national structures by receiving pensions at the age of fifty (it was aged sixty for men). Ruixin Huang said that the improved status of women was good because he and his wife could share business responsibilities together. Bai Jiang said that men and women were equal today because women "do not need to shape their fate." In the Sun household, Li raised the topic of prostitution in the village but offered no opinion about this.

The concept of gender equality as development was discussed in many ways: compensation through structures, attitudinal or cultural shifts, respecting women's opinions, access to education, and career and business opportunities. It was focused on improving the lives and status of women, and it was discussed more in terms of agency than structure (but respondents did not use the term 'gender equality').

Air and water quality:

The theme of good air and water quality was raised within the households. Five households discussed the good air and water quality as a benefit of living in the village; one household highlighted the deterioration of water quality in the river.

Bai Jiang said that while the air quality was good he would be concerned about new factories that jeopardised this. Liu Zhong agreed, and commented that it was good that there were no factories in the area, and that the air quality was better than the bigger cities such as Guangdong and Shanghai. Li Sun discussed the importance of good air quality in terms of his fruit growing business; that he could grow better quality fruit. Zhou Zhong associated the benefits of clean air with health, and the Huang household viewed it as a lifestyle factor—being able to work in the countryside free from pollution. On the issue of water pollution, Zhou Zhong discussed the deterioration of the river (from upstream origins), and how this caused the loss of marine life and drinkable water, and the ability to wash clothes (in the river).

Although the topic of air quality was discussed to some extent, it formed a part of the respondents' understanding of sustainable development. It was less certain whether maintaining a river free from pollution was a widespread concept of development.

Health:

The topic of health was discussed as the introduction of medical insurance, and the reputation that *Siping* County has for the longevity of its people. It seemed that medical insurance was offered to villagers in connection with the village relocation negotiations. However, Zhou Zhong noted that only those who had land would receive it. As a senior citizen, Zhou, who had a serious illness after the governments forced vasectomies campaign in the early 1950s, saw medical insurance as a sound improvement and security for his life. No other respondents shared the same excitement about medical insurance as Zhou did.

Many villagers gave explanations as to the reputed longevity of *Siping* County residents. Several households suggested that the air quality and the water in the environment were main factors. Liu Zhong believed that it was due to the people's attitudes ("being content with your life"). Zhou commented that the air quality—and therefore health—was much better in the village today because gas was being used for cooking rather than wood.

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) was not spoken of as a major factor for a healthy lifestyle—or for treating illness—in the households. Liu Zhong did not use TCM but said it was not as good in the village as in the city. Ruixin Huang indicated that he enjoyed moxibustion (also known as cupping) and massage as a health benefit.

Although the theme of health and development was not particularly strong in this village,

villagers perceived the good air and water quality as being beneficial for health and longevity. Interestingly, Yulai Chu was the only respondent that explicitly discussed a more nutritious diet in the modern China as a factor for better health.

Social status:

The topic of social status as important for development was evident in several households. It was discussed rather explicitly in the Liu and Zhou Zhong households, both brothers, who belonged to the landlord class before the Mao era. It is possible that social status was particularly important to these brothers as their family were once wealthy landowners in the village but lost a large amount of land under Mao. Liu placed much emphasis on his grandsons doing well at school, so that they could achieve good employment and social standing. Liu also attached considerable importance to former middle school classmates who attained prestigious government positions. Zhou commented that it was important to have a university-educated family member so that the household would be respected and not fall behind others. Zhou and Liu also implicitly viewed social status as essential for development by their constant comparisons with others. (This will be discussed in the next section on spatial development). Li Sun briefly discussed social status in terms of the capacity to do good deeds for people in the community, such as beggars and dragon dancers at Spring Festival time. Cui Yongyun talked about social status in terms of the improved status of women.

(Note: Although a key word search of "social status" did not produce much information, it appeared to be a rather implicit theme in many discussions and may be associated with the Chinese concept of 'face')

Urban migration:

The theme of urban migration was discussed in a variety of ways across four households. Both the Zhou Zhong and Qi households suggested that it was good for young people to leave the village to work: the former so that the young could contribute to household income; the latter for the benefit of the young migrant workers themselves. Bo Qi said that migration began in the village right after the relaxation of the *Hukou* system in 1979, and that this enabled villagers to delink from farm work to move into businesses. Liu Zhong suggested that migration was made possible through improved transport and infrastructure, which diminished the remoteness of *Tiantang* village. Although many young *Tiantang* villagers left for work in urban areas, they returned twice during the year to help the elderly harvest.

Migration was about the necessity of finding better working opportunities outside the village. It involved the young and was spoken of positively because it meant more money and a better life. Nothing was discussed about the social implications of urban migration for families.

Employment conditions:

Before the reform era, *Tiantang* villagers did farm work. Agricultural work extended to schoolchildren who spent several days a week on the farm. Several villagers described the working conditions as very tough. Bai Jiang said, "[under the conditions of starvation and little clothing] we worked all day long for very little reward." Lui Zhong commented that he worked hard every day then came home to cook with few resources. Bo Qi spoke about farming all day for only one *yuan* before the reforms.

When the reforms began, villagers were required to spend only two months per year farming; the rest of their time could be spent elsewhere, even as migrant workers in urban centres. Many villagers migrated to urban areas to find better work because it became more lucrative than agricultural work. None of the respondents were doing traditional farming as their livelihoods. There was a seed and peanut seller, a fruit grower, hotel operators, bee farmers, and elderly retirees doing small jobs. Working life was today more relaxed and villagers were free to spend time as they wished. Bai Jiang, for example, said that he worked from 7 am to 12 pm and had the afternoon to relax.

The opportunity for individual business ownership was significant for the Huang household. Ruixin and Huiming were pleased to be running a business as opposed to doing factory work because they wanted to avoid manipulation from a boss. Although Ruixin believed business success depended on his relationship to his boss, and said that he wanted to do another business (but for lack of education), the householders commented that business ownership was better than working as employees.

Improved working conditions discussed as freedom of work choice and working hours were connected with the concept of development in *Tiantang* village.

Ancestral worship and religion:

Ancestral worship was discussed in each household but not in a specifically meaningful way. It was usually mentioned in passing, as something that the households did at Spring Festival time. None of the respondents associated ancestral worship with religion.

Ancestral worship appeared to be for remembrance rather than the worship or interaction with familial spirits. Many respondents claimed to be atheist and had no concept of a spiritual world. Bai Jiang was very suspicious of ancestral worship and suggested that it could be used as a tool for deceit and manipulation. The best insight into ancestral worship came when observing Li Sun and his son performing an ancestral ceremony one afternoon. As they burned money and incense, they explained that ancestors could spend in the next world. But when I questioned whether this meant that they believed in the spiritual realm, Li Sun flatly denied it saying it was just a part of

tradition, and that it was just like a legend. He also said he was paying homage to let other villagers know he had ancestors buried at that location. This indicated that ancestral worship had psychological and cultural benefits for the household but there was insufficient data to make any assertion as to the significance it had in the villager's concept of development.

The data suggested that spirituality was generally not a concept in relation to development (although the Huang household spoke briefly and dispassionately about religion). Zhou Zhong spoke about a traditional god called *Pangu*, who created the world and was a god to whom people paid taxes, but he did not believe in it and referred to *Pangu* as a legend.

Ancestral worship may have served the purpose of familiarity and filial piety responsibilities in *Tiantang*, but it was a cultural and not religious practice. Indeed, apart from the migrant household (but only slightly so), religion was not a concept of development.

Village committee elections:

Not long after this study began, *Tiantang* village held a village committee election (December 18) so it was discussed across most households except the Huang household (migrants from Zhejiang) and the Qi household (the household head being the village leader and political candidate). The consensus was that elections were not an important part of village life, and merely form rather than genuine efforts at substantial political development. Bai Jiang said that he did not care about the election because he trusted "elders" to govern the country properly. "It [China] is like a big family," he said. Liu Zhong, employed as an electoral officer, commented that "it is just form and no substance", adding that adopting elements of Western style elections such as candidates giving campaign policy speeches during elections would make an improvement. Li Sun commented that the election was not important because it was not conducted fairly, suggesting that candidates were preselected at county level. He also indicated that candidate participation in elections required power and influence: "Chinese will know what elections are all about; if you have power and money you can take part in an election." Li Sun believed the election had no use because he could not become a candidate. Zhou Zhong said that he was in favour of Western style elections because "in your country you do not vote for idiots." He also noted that nothing had improved politically in the village. Cui Yongyun, the village leader's wife, commented that elections were good because it gave villagers a choice of leader every three years (as opposed to five years in the past).

It may be asserted that villagers generally did not consider elections to be conducted freely and fairly. It appeared that it was the top-down, traditional way of patronage that determined political outcomes in the village election.

Relocation of villagers (conflict resolution):

The major topic discussed in almost every discussion was the proposed village relocation. In December when the study began, there were rumours that the village would be relocated, and the negotiations between the local government and villagers intensified over the next six months. The local government dealt with the negotiations by gradually releasing information, either to test or appease villagers. On the other hand, villagers handled conflict by maintaining solidarity against the local officials.

For some villagers, the impending relocation represented development because they believed they would get a better quality house (Bai Jiang, Liu Zhong, and Bo Qi). Others did not think that their housing situation would improve, and doubted whether the negotiations were being conducted transparently and fairly (Li Sun and Zhou Zhong). Li Sun was particularly opposed to the relocation because he had much wealth to lose (because the offer in the new location was based on 35 square metres per registered household member rather than on property area). Li Sun stood to lose three properties as well as a fruit growing business.

In one discussion, Li explained that in situations across China (*Yaxi* and Chongqing) where property relocations had been conducted unfairly, villagers resolved conflicts by moving up the government chain until justice prevailed. Li said that *Tiantang* villagers were rather powerless in the negotiation process and needed advocacy from powerful people. The fruit grower explained that villagers were trying to bring back a government connection from Shanghai (an ex-*Siping* County official) to help represent villagers with negotiations.

The discourse on the negotiations showed that it was through traditional means that both sides preferred to approach conflict resolution than through the law. Still, it appeared that some villagers were aware that the law could be used where traditional methods failed. From the local government side, it did not want to stir up trouble to attract attention from higher levels of government. Its move to start paying villagers 600 *yuan* per month just before the commencement of the Chinese New Year festival may have been an attempt to appease villagers.

The negotiation process indicated that local government was cautious in the way it approached villagers. The demolition of the village was supposed to have started at the end of May, however this had been stalled and the relocation negotiations were at a stalemate. The local government proposed that the relocation would commence around the Chinese New Year in 2012.

Relocation negotiations revealed a political process that was traditional. Both parties seemed to be aware of responsibilities toward each other. Group solidarity and traditional rights were ways that villagers tended to conceptualise grassroots political development in the face of conflict. From above, conflict resolution was being managed by tradition, the Party and personality.

Perceived corruption:

The topic of local government corruption was raised in two household case studies, but it appeared to be more of a suspicion in one case and a matter of personal rivalry in the other, rather than any concrete claims.

In the first case, Liu Zhong suspected that the government ("some officials") would be making money out of the village relocation. Liu was a little hesitant to talk about local officials because he later back tracked by saying that the land did not belong to villagers anyway; but later he cast doubt over the moral character of government officials in China today—suggesting that local cadres today could serve as leaders and run a brothel. Liu seemed to be speaking generally to avoid a direct attack on the village leadership.

In the other case, Li Sun constantly raised doubt over the character of the village Party Secretary ("he has three wives and eight children"). The businessman was very suspicious about the way local government was planning the relocation and alleged that the Party Secretary was using his position to make money. Li also believed that the village committee elections were not conducted fairly because he was not allowed to run as a candidate. Zhuang Sun briefly talked about corruption and suggested that there was a lot of government corruption from the county level downwards, but offered no examples.

It appeared that corruption is something that villagers find problematic for development. but there was not enough data to make this claim confidently. Li Sun spoke of a village meeting—the first meeting announcing the relocation—where many villagers revolted against the leaders but this was not validated by other villagers. Even though Liu Zhong discussed possible corruption, he did not considerd that there were any hindrances to development in the village.

Enterprise and tourism:

The tourist town enterprise in *Fugui* County represented an important concept of development in the household case studies. The tourist site mostly attracted tourists on weekends and during national holidays. It provided villagers with larger markets and it also represented a symbol of China's economic growth and advancement, but *Tiantang* villagers had been prevented from selling there.

Respondents spoke about it with mixed emotions. Bai Jiang commented that he was jealous of *Fugui* County because it was much richer and because he had been prevented from selling produce. At first Bai said that the tourist enterprise did not help business but later reversed this when commenting that *Tiantang* village's proximity to the tourist centre was useful. Liu Zhong viewed *Suhe* ancient tourist town as representing China's rapid economic growth. When asked to take photographs on 'development' Liu gave a tour to the tourist town to take photographs of

boats, buildings, the school, and Buddhist temple. While taking photographs, Liu spoke of the urgency for China to catch up with the rest of the world. Li Sun discussed the tourist town in terms of how it assisted him to sell more fruit in *Tiantang* village street market. Without the *Suhe* tourist town's proximity, Li was certain he would not have generated as much wealth. Zhou Zhong also discussed the importance of the tourist enterprise for its money earning potential. Zhou commented that there were more people coming through the village because of the ancient town and that this enabled him to do small businesses. For the Huang household, Ruixin said that the tourist town made no difference because companies and tourists bought honey products directly. The Qi household envisioned the tourist development as a potentially future business boon for their hotel business because of a complimentary project being planned for *Tiantang* village.

The *Suhe* ancient tourist town was discussed as development because it attracted a larger market to the village, and therefore provided more income and business opportunities.

Implementation of national policy (good governance):

Although there seemed to be ambivalence towards local government at times, and that there were concerns about the transparency of relocation negotiations, there was contentment with the way national policy was implemented during the reform era. For example, Bai Jiang commented that he was happy with the implementation of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake compensation policy and the abolishing of agricultural taxation. Liu Zhong talked of how the 'Go west' policy had been working effectively over the past eleven years, and how education had improved under Deng. In addition, Liu said that the government was making good policies to attract foreign investment, even though he gave the example of the Shanghai company contracted to build property in *Tiantang* village. Li Sun said that the Open Door policy and the Household Responsibility System were policies that had a huge impact in the village. When asked about the meaning of development Li said that it was about good governance, by which he meant when local government implemented policy with fairness. Li was voicing his concerns in these comments about the fairness of the planned village relocation. For Zhou Zhong, it was important that the central and local governments worked well together: on the local leaders he said, "it is very important [that they be university-educated] because if they have good knowledge they can accurately implement the central government's policies." In the Huang household, Ruixin viewed policy implementation as something that the local government decreed and that villagers had to follow without question, and that this was the only way that development would occur in *Tiantang* village. In the Qi household, much of the discussion was about how Deng's policies had dramatically improved life in the village, with Cui saying that "everything in the village relies on policy and decision-making."

It appeared that villagers were satisfied with the way local government had been implementing policy. However, villager satisfaction was being tested by the lack of clarity concerning the planned relocation. The discussions indicated that villagers considered local government to be doing a good job if their lives were improving, because they regularly noted their lack of understanding of central government policy details, and they were not particularly interested. Villagers determined whether policy was properly implemented by watching television and by talking amongst themselves. Policy implementation was understood through the relationship between local government and each other rather than by studying the technicalities of national policy. This concept of development as good governance was very relational.

Access to markets:

Access to markets was spoken of as the desire to find larger markets and as concerns about the potential loss of markets from the planned relocation. The eagerness to discover larger markets was the strongest in the Huang case where Ruixin regularly asked about the prospect of exporting honey to Australia. He also spoke of an initiative within the industry to sell honey from mobile vans as a potential market expansion. Li Sun was another respondent who exported produce, and he was aware of and able to connect with larger markets. But as Li's business survival was coming under threat during the discussions, he seemed to lose enthusiasm for market expansion. The other households spoke of larger market access in terms of the importance of the local ancient tourist town for attracting tourists.

Li Sun provided the greatest insight into the politics of local markets. He explained that *Tiantang* villagers ran a market in the *Suhe* tourist town for over two hundred years, but that in December 2010 *Suhe* Township decided that *Tiantang* villagers were no longer permitted to sell there, and that a conflict ensued. To resolve this, *Tiantang* villagers started conducting their own street market, but the *Suhe* Township government still protested and tried to have it banished (on the grounds that it was too noisy and not good for tourism), even though *Tiantang* was outside its jurisdiction. *Tiantang* villagers stood their ground and the street market was established.

Other households spoke about markets in a variety of ways. Zhou Zhong talked about the importance of the street market and its proximity to the tourist area. For Zhou, the street market and ancient town had given opportunities to make and sell craftwork. He suggested that the relocation of *Tiantang* village must include access to good markets as a condition. The local markets were discussed as being very important in the Jiang household, which sold produce on alternate days between the *Munan* Township and *Tiantang* village. Bai Jiang talked about the value of local markets despite having the security of a motor vehicle to drive to other markets. In the case of the Qi household, the business couple was relying on the future expansion of the tourist area for expanding business. Bo and Cui believed that as *Siping* County developed its own

ancient town it would create larger markets for the hotel business. Liu Zhong advocated the importance of foreign investment for the development of markets in the area.

Access to larger markets was important across each household and this was evident when a loss of market access was threatened. Many households were aware of the possibility of accessing markets beyond the local area and potentially larger local markets into the future as tourism grew. Market access and growth were discussed as concepts of development in *Tiantang* village, even though it did not seem that markets were entirely free.

Non-government organisations:

Thinking about NGOs as a concept of development was not evident in *Tiantang* village. NGOs were discussed twice (Zhou Zhong and Qi households) but on both occasions respondents had no knowledge of them. Cao Wei stated firmly that the Party would not allow an NGO, and discussed them as linked to the past activity of a *falungong* group in the village. Cui did not understand what an NGO was either, suggesting that they were anti-government gangster organisations, and that they did not exist in China because it was a socialist country. These opinions on NGOs suggested that villagers' concepts of development were perceived as an exclusively governmental role.

Central government policy:

The discussions across households indicated that villagers believed that central government policies had improved over the years and made significant impacts. However, none of the respondents spoke about central government policy in detailed terms or with conviction. Villagers tended to speak in general terms such as:

> The Sichuan government will look to the central governments decisions and the central government looks at foreign ideas when making decisions (Bai Jiang)
>
> Without Deng's policies there would be no education, Deng's policy is all good things (Liu Zhong)
>
> Good policy is whatever helps the people. For example, the opening up of China in the 1970s was a good policy. Another good policy was the Household Responsibility System when the government allocated land to the people (Li Sun)
>
> Deng Xiaoping is the main reason [for better food and clothing]…Open Door Policy…Without that we would have all died (Cao Wei)
>
> The Open Door Policy is responsible for the development in the village (Cui Yongyun)

While some villagers discussed several policies such as 'harmonious society', One-child Policy, abolition of agricultural taxation, the 'go west' policy, they did so vaguely (however, Zhou Zhong considered the abolishing of taxation to be the greatest achievement of the Communist Party). There was no mention of Hu Jintao's 'Scientific Development Concept', which had been the

centre of the current administration for almost ten years. Moreover, when several households discussed the twelfth five-year plan (across all of the media at the time of the discussions), they were either not interested, cynical, or had no knowledge of it.

It seemed that villagers were not interested in discussing abstract policies; preferring to talk about tangible items of everyday life. Villagers determined whether policies had taken effect by watching the news on television and by village gossip and meetings (nevertheless, many villagers did not claim to be regular television viewers). Households were generally pleased with national 'policy' without knowing the full benefits of each policy, and without understanding their personal rights therein. Good central government governance for villagers was based on trust; that the centre was doing the right thing by the people, like 'one big family' as one respondent said.

National leadership:

The theme of the importance of national leaders was evident throughout the discussions, and spoken of in terms of life under Mao or life under Deng. No reference was made to reform era leaders except in the case of Cao Wei who said that he would be excited if a leader like Premier Wen Jiabao visited the village.

Distinctions made between the lack of development under Mao's leadership and substantial development under Deng's were clear in the Zhou Zhong, Liu Zhong, and Li Sun cases, all of which came from a landlord background. Bai Jiang talked of the leaders like parents, and placed great trust in their ability to govern: "Even a tiger knows how to take care of its cubs." Cao Wei, who often praised the Party, made it obvious that Deng's leadership was far better than Mao's. He spent most of the time talking of personal hardship and abuse under Mao and contrasted this with the better life he enjoyed since Deng: "Fifty years under Mao is like one year under Deng…Life was very hard during Mao's era. China went backwards because of Mao." Cao's reverence for Deng was plain to see in his home, which had a portrait of a young Deng Xiaoping on the living room wall, set up in an arrangement that looked like a shrine. To Cao, Deng had an emperor-like status. Li Sun also gave lavish praise to Deng because of the numerous opportunities in the village after Deng came to power. Zhou asserted that development in *Tiantang* was due to the central government leaders because they made the decisions. He gave the example of the current government as the greatest 'dynasty' of China because it abolished the centuries-old problem of the peasant tax burden. In the Qi household, Bo attributed *Tiantang* village's development to Deng and suggested that Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao were just following Deng: "Without Deng we would not have this life today." He also said that Deng's period was the greatest 'dynasty' in China's history. While Liu Zhong praised Deng's leadership, he also discussed China's leadership of imperial times, asserting that the Tang Dynasty was the greatest in China's history (because it

held a position of power and influence in the world).

It seemed that villagers identified a strong correlation between household wellbeing and the national leader's personality and status. However, recent leaders did not have the same recognition as having been as effective or as important as Deng Xiaoping. Deng was perceived as the leader responsible for breaking the shackles of underdevelopment in *Tiantang* village, and perhaps he was even revered as the last 'emperor'.

Economic growth:

China's economic growth was implicitly spoken of as major factor for development in *Tiantang* village, and it was often linked to Deng's 'Opening Up' policies. Bai Jiang discussed improvements in daily life such as food, water, and housing in connection with China's rapidly growing economy, but the local ancient tourist town and infrastructure were perceived as being symbolic of growth as well. Liu Zhong spoke about infrastructure and buildings, particularly in *Suhe* ancient town, as examples of economic growth, but added that development had not yet occurred in *Tiantang* village. Li Sun discussed economic growth in connection with better food security, opportunities and higher incomes, and he contrasted this with poverty during the Mao era. Zhou Zhong also associated improved income, food security, and housing with China's economic growth, and suggested that future pension increases would be linked to economic growth. Ruixin Huang made a direct correlation between business success and the Chinese economy's performance: "My business can only grow as far as the Chinese economy grows…It all depends upon the economy." Bo Qi associated the expansion of *Suhe* tourist town with China's economic growth, and attributed the town's rise to Deng Xiaoping.

Discussions showed that villagers had a trickle-down understanding of economic growth, that is, the belief that as the Chinese economy grew benefits would flow down to the local economy, businesses and households.

International trade and relations:

Some households were aware of the importance of China's foreign relations for security purposes, for continuing and improving China's modernisation. While Bai Jiang spoke in passing about the importance of China's military strength, he was more interested in attracting foreign business to the village. Liu Zhong commented on the importance of China's military strength but discussed foreign investment with much more passion. He was adamant that China required foreign investment to improve science and technology, build better infrastructure, and create employment. Zhou Zhong said that China's military was important for security, "like having a bodyguard", but

he did not discuss trade matters. Ruixin Huang was the most curious about foreign trade and discussed this on every occasion. However, while interested in trading, Ruixin understood that the logistics of exporting products might be too difficult and involve numerous regulation barriers. In the Qi household, Bo said that reforms had allowed the Chinese to have more interaction with foreigners, that it was now easy to travel abroad, and that it was easier for foreigners to visit China.

International trade and relations were discussed in terms of national security and modernisation of the Chinese economy. It was viewed as being potentially very beneficial for the village but above the everyday life of villagers, as something that they might indirectly benefit from.

National pride (nationalism):

National pride was spoken of as China's place in the world, its rise, and as the hope of returning to the place it once had in its glorious past. Bai Jiang talked about a brighter day coming across China, when everyone would live in harmony; where everyone would look after family members and outsiders, including other nations. He spoke as though a new era in China was dawning. Liu Zhong desired for China to grow rapidly so that it could become number one in the world again, like the days of the Tang Dynasty. He talked of his pride concerning the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, that China was now strong and powerful in the world (even though he was not particularly interested in sports). Liu viewed the Tang Dynasty as China's greatest because it was powerful and influential, but also because "other nations were afraid to offend China" back then. Zhou Zhong discussed development in China with implicit pride. The elderly gentleman was keenly aware that China was getting stronger again, but he also believed that it was still lagging behind Western nations (particularly in science and technology). He made numerous comparisons between China and the West to gauge his, and China's, level of development. In the Huang household, Huiming said she was proud to be Chinese because she now had the ability to host a foreigner rather than be a slave (indicating her understanding that China had been so in the past). For the Qi household, Bo implicitly indicated national pride through his belief that China had a rich food culture and that Chinese food was the best.

It was evident that the households understood they belonged to a grand civilization, but also that it had fallen behind other nations. Households held confidence that China was on the rise again and because of this, they had a growing sense of national pride.

11.3 Spatial perspectives of development

Table 13 below reveals the ways that development was spatially perceived within each household case study. It reflects the degree of importance that each household attached the topics it discussed, and the reach or sphere to which each topic related.

It is evident from a quick glance at the table that households primarily discussed development in the order of household then village, with the household overwhelmingly being the most significant domain of conceptualisation. The conceptualisations of development less frequently extended beyond the village. When villagers discussed national and international topics they did so with less conviction, and knowledge sources came from the media or village gossip.

The table suggests *Tiantang* villagers were perhaps not particularly community focused, with each household being predominantly concerned with its own wellbeing and survival than with village, national, or international concepts of development. Exceptions to this assertion may be the Zhong households (and the Sun household); their spatial perspectives may have been due to their family's pre-PRC family classification of landlord (landlords having a larger sphere of influence than peasants). As the Zhong family once owned most of the land in the village, Liu and Zhou Zhong may have still held a sentimental sense of ownership and responsibility for the village. Nevertheless, the data suggest that these households spoke predominantly about development in the sphere of household or clan.

Household	*Family/personal topics*	*Village/Local government topics*	*National topics*	*International topics*
Jiang	**Food security** **Housing** Clothing **Transportation** **Household goods and services** Education **Better income** **Social security** Gender equality Air and water quality Health **Employment conditions** Ancestral worship **Relocation** Enterprise and tourism **Access to markets** Central government policy **National leadership** **Economic growth** Nationalism	Housing Ancestral worship Village elections Relocation **Access to markets** **National leadership** Trade and relations	Education Central government policy Nationalism	
Liu Zhong	**Food security** **Housing** Clothing **Transportation** Household goods and services **Education** Better incomes **Social security** Air and water quality Health **Social status** Urban migration	**Food security** **Housing** **Education** **Social status** Employment conditions Village elections Relocation **Corruption** **Enterprise and tourism** **Policy implementation** **National leadership** **Economic growth**	**Education** Corruption Central government policy **National leadership** **Nationalism**	**Education** **Trade and relations** **Nationalism**

	Employment conditions Ancestral worship Village elections **Relocation** **Enterprise and tourism** **Policy implementation** Access to markets **Central government policy** **National leadership** **Economic growth** **Nationalism**	**Trade and relations**		
Sun	**Food security** **Housing** Clothing **Education** **Better incomes** **Social security** Gender equality Air and water quality Health **Social status** Employment conditions **Ancestral worship** Village elections **Relocation** **Corruption** **Enterprise and tourism** **Policy implementation** **Access to markets** **Central government policy** **National leadership** **Economic growth**	**Food security** **Housing** **Education** **Social status** Ancestral worship **Relocation** **Corruption** **Enterprise and tourism** **Policy implementation** **Access to markets** **Central government policy** **National leadership** **Economic growth**	Education **Relocation** **Corruption** **Central government policy** **National leadership**	
Zhou Zhong	**Food security** **Housing** **Clothing** **Transportation** **Household goods and services**	**Housing** Education Better incomes Gender equality **Air and water quality**	**Education** Ancestral worship **National leadership** Trade and relations Nationalism	**Education**

	Education **Better incomes** **Social security** **Gender equality** **Air and water quality** **Health** **Social status** Urban migration Employment conditions Ancestral worship Village elections **Relocation** **Enterprise and tourism** **Policy implementation** **Access to markets** **Central government policy** **National leadership** **Economic growth** Trade and relations **Nationalism**	Health **Social status** Urban migration Employment conditions Village elections **Relocation** **Enterprise and tourism** **Policy implementation** **Access to markets** NGOs **National leadership** **Economic growth**		
Huang	Food security Housing Clothing Transportation **Education** **Better incomes** Social security **Gender equality** **Air and water quality** Health Employment conditions Ancestral worship Village elections **Access to markets** Central government policy **Economic growth** **Trade and relations**	**Air and water quality** Relocation	Gender equality Policy implementation Access to markets National leadership Economic growth	**Access to markets**

Qi	Food security Housing **Clothing** **Transportation** Education Better incomes **Social security** **Gender equality** Urban migration **Employment conditions** Village elections **Relocation** **Enterprise and tourism** **National leadership** **Economic growth** Trade and relations Nationalism	Urban migration Village elections **Relocation** **Enterprise and tourism** Access to markets **National leadership** **Economic growth**	Gender equality NGOs	

Table 13 Spatial Perspective of Development in *Tiantang* Village

Bold means discussed as a significant issue; discussed but not as a significant issue

11.4 Historical perspectives of development

Table 14 below shows the topics of development discussed from a historical perspective. It suggests that the start of the reform era represented a clear discontinuity in the perceptions of development within *Tiantang* village. The most widely spoken historical aspects of development were food security (more food, better quality and variety), education (greater access and better quality), and employment conditions (more opportunities, better working hours, markets, urban migration, better income potential), with the Qi household suggesting that the introduction of Household Responsibility System in 1979 was the catalyst for many other aspects of development. Gender equality was also a significant longitudinally discussed aspect of development, with equal opportunity and voice/opinion (respect) between men and women discussed as an important improvement.

Historical view		
Topic	*Past*	*Present*
Food security	*In the past many starved to death…(Bai Jiang)* *All our parents asked for was enough to eat…(Bai Jiang)* *When the PRC was first established many people starved (Bai Jiang)* *Although my family was rich, we could only eat rice and noodles every day…we only ate 1 kg of rice every day…(Liu Zhong)* *In the past we could barely eat meat once a month (Cao Wei)* *Many villagers during Mao's era could not earn enough to eat (Li Sun)* *We could not eat enough. We were very poor (Cui Yongyun)* *Back then, [during Mao's time] we were hungry all day long. We only ate twice a day…and ate meat once a month (Bo Qi)* *Before the land reform you cannot eat enough… (Bo Qi)*	*These days I have meat for every meal…(Bai Jiang)* *…but now we do not need to worry about whether we can eat…(Bai Jiang)* *…I have plenty to eat every day (Bai Jiang)* *…we do not need to worry about these things any more (Bai Jiang)* *…but now we eat many types of food…more vegetables…my grandson now drinks milk. This was impossible in the past. (Liu Zhong)* *Pigs today eat better than we did back then (Li Sun)* *I am eating better (Zhou Zhong)*
Housing	*Before the PRC was established the size of my family's property was much larger…(Liu Zhong)*	*I now have… a bigger house…(Bai Jiang)* *…before it was divided up to share among the villagers (Liu Zhong)* *I have a bigger house (Li Sun)* *I have better accommodation (Zhou Zhong)*
Clothing	*Before the land reform… you cannot wear enough (Bo Qi)*	*…now we do not need to worry about whether we will have clothes to wear. (Bai Jiang)* *These days I have more clothes, better quality clothes (Zhou Zhong)*
Transportation		*I now have…an automobile…(Bai Jiang)*
Households goods and services	*I would have to come home and find branches to burn to cook food for my children. We did not have gas back then (Liu Zhong)* *In the past we used a lot of wood to cook food…(Zhou Zhong)*	*I now have… pipe water, as well as water for cooking and drinking tea. (Bai Jiang)* *Now we have gas (Liu Zhong)* *I have more home appliances (Li Sun)* *I am happy that my family can have more things (Zhou Zhong)* *…but now we use gas [to cook]. Everyone now uses gas. (Zhou Zhong)*

Education	*...you couldn't go to school [during the Cultural Revolution] (Bai Jiang)* *…I only went to grade four (Mei Wen)* *I could only go to middle school…to go to high school would have required long distance travel and competitive entrance exams (Liu Zhong)* *My daughter did not go to university…families with better connections got ahead (Liu Zhong)* *I had to walk 60 kilometres to school, starting early in the morning and arriving at three in the afternoon (Liu Zhong)* *When students used to go abroad they [had to] deposit a large sum of money in a bank account…(Liu Zhong)* *…the teachers didn't really care about the students education (Li Sun)* *Under Mao's presidency they thought everyone was the same, had the same ability…(Zhou Zhong)* *When I was at middle school we had only four subjects: Chinese, mathematics, politics and history…The quality of teaching was very bad…It was rare for anyone to go to high school (Cui Yongyun)*	*…now [depositing money] is no longer a requirement. The graduates know they can return to a good job with an excellent salary (Liu Zhong).* *…but after Deng…they started to realize that everyone is different…some are more gifted, diligent, and learn things better under certain conditions (Zhou Zhong)* *Overall education for everybody has improved. There are a lot of college students now…High school was not as good in my day as elementary school today (Cui Yongyun)*
Employment conditions	*I had to shovel the duck shit (Bai Jiang)* *I started the business twenty years ago…I had very limited stock (Bai Jiang)* *Many years ago the government owned all the farmland…all of the farm labour was organized…villagers were paid according to the type of work…and how hard you worked…the payment [for work] was mainly in food…also paid a minimum wage…there was no freedom of movement…we had to report to work every day (Liu Zhong)* *With my family background [landlord] I did not get the chance to be allocated higher level employment (Liu Zhong)* *You could not do business at that time. We did farm work all day long (Cui Yongyun)*	*…but over the years my range of seed and nuts has expanded…(Bai Jiang)* *After the land reform, you only needed to spend two months on the farm. The rest of the time you can go out and work somewhere else; migrant work…Before 1979 everyone had to work on the farm but now you can do your own business (Bo Qi)*

	A man worked a whole day for 1 yuan [before the land reform], and that was quite high (Bo Qi)	
Gender equality	*In the past women used to take care of the home and did not have an education…(Hua Yulin)* *In the old society women were treated badly and they suffered when they were young (Zhou Zhong)* *Women were equal under Mao but mistreated under the Guomindang. They didn't have any power. Men had all the power (Zhou Zhong)* *Women could not even sit at the same table as men…young or old (Cao Wei)* *In the past a lot of attention was paid to boys…(Huiming Yang)* *Women did not have a career in the past…Before women could not go outside. (Cui Yongyun)*	*Women do not need to shape their fate anymore…Men and woman are equal now (Bai Jiang)* *It's [conditions for women] still the same (Ling Hua)* *…but now women are educated and go to work (Hua Yulin)* *We are now trying to compensate the women so that they can enjoy the latter years of their life (Zhou Zhong)* *Women have more of a say these days and are getting stronger (Huiming Yang)* *…but now there is more of a focus on girls. The focus on boys does not exist now. It is equal. (Huiming Yang)* *The change for women has been good for me because my wife and I can share responsibilities together (Ruixin Huang).* *Nowadays women are sometimes above men…The improved status of women started with Mao (Cui Yongyun)*
Ancestral worship	*In Mao's time temples were not allowed…(Liu Zhong)* *Under Mao religion was pushed underground…(Li Sun)* *When I was young, my parents took me to the temple to pray…(Zhou Zhong)*	*…but now they [temples] are coming back (Liu Zhong)* *…but nowadays people…have the freedom to practice their religion of choice (Li Sun)* *…but these days very few people believe in religion (Zhou Zhong)*
Village elections	*In the past, the government selected the village leader… (Liu Zhong)*	*…but now the villagers can choose from a variety of candidates (Liu Zhong)* *I can now choose whoever is good for the village (Cui Yongyun)*
Perceived corruption	*When leaders were selected in the past their past and life experiences were taken into consideration, but this has changed…In the past, you could not serve as leader and run a brothel… (Liu Zhong)*	*…but nowadays this is acceptable (Liu Zhong)*
Enterprise and tourism	*When Mao was in Charge we could not do business with foreigners. You would get into trouble (Cui Yongyun)*	
Access to markets	*There was no market back then, only government supply centres (Liu Zhong)* *For about 200 years there had been a street market in the main street of the tourist town…(Li Sun)*	*…but now if you want to do business there [in the tourist town] you need to pay 60,000 to 70,000 yuan per year. (Li Sun)*

Central government policy	*Farmers were required to give crops to the emperor. It was a burden for the farmers (Zhou Zhong)*	*Many people would not have been able to do the things they can today without Deng's policies (Li Sun)* *The Chinese Communist Party is good because it has resolved this centuries-old problem [the peasant tax burden]..they have abolished taxation (Zhou Zhong)* *The policies are getting better and better…I am doing nothing but I can get 600 yuan from the government (Zhou Zhong)*
National leadership	*Mao oppressed the intelligent people…because he was afraid of them; that he would be overthrown…he just made people work hard…people did not have a chance to go to school…However, after the establishment of the PRC, Mao and the Party started using intelligent people (Liu Zhong)* *In the past we were treated badly…(Cao Wei)*	*…but now the Communist Party is good. We are free from bullying. I never thought that I would be free from bullying. (Cao Wei)* *Without Deng we would not have this life today (Bo Qi)*
Nationalism	*China was the top nation back then [during the Tang Dynasty]. Other nations were afraid to offend China. They served China by doing good trade and even gave their daughters to be married, to build good relations. (Liu Zhong)* *In the past China wasted a long time lagging behind (Liu Zhong)*	*China is now improving and is only behind America and Europe (Liu Zhong)* *…so it now needs to catch up with the rest of the world. We do not want to lag behind other nations. We want to be the same or better. It is a shame to lag behind (Liu Zhong)*

Table 14 Historical Perspectives of development in *Tiantang* village

11.5 Dimensional perspective of development

In the table below (Table 15) are the rankings that nine respondents gave concerning the dimensions of development in *Tiantang* village. Each villager ranked the importance of the dimensions of development from the most important to the least important. Six represented the most important aspect of development with the scale shifting downward to one being the least.

It appears that the dimensions of cultural and economic development were the most important aspects of development across the households, with political development not far behind these two. This reveals that education along with economic wellbeing were considered important values for households as these enabled some degree of social status within the village. It also may suggest that although households were economically better off today, material items were considered as secondary values of development—but by no means unimportant. While bellies were full and the family was doing well in education or had some sense of influence in their working lives, respondents seemed content and happy about life.

Name	*Political*	*Economic*	*Social*	*Cultural*	*Spiritual*	*Environ-mental*
Bai Jiang	2	5.5	3	5.5	1	4
Li Sun	6	5	2	4	1	3
Liu Zhong	3	5	4	6	1	2
Zhou Zhong	6	4	5	3	2	1
Ruixin Huang	5	4	3	6	2	1
Ping Chu	5	4	1	6	2	3
Cui Yongyan	6	3	4	5	1	2
Sun Yong	3	6	2	5	1	4
Hui Zhang	1	6	5	4	2	3
Total	37	42.5	29	44.5	13	23

Table 15 Ranking of Dimensions in *Tiantang* Village

I asked some respondents why they gave their first and last ranking and they said:

Name	*First ranking*	*Last ranking*
Bai Jiang	*[On economic development] I have more things than in the past…*	*[On spiritual development] I do not believe in God*
Liu Zhong	*[On cultural development] Education gives me knowledge*	*[On spiritual development] I do not have a religion. It is not really connected to my daily life.*
Li Sun	*It [political development] enables people to do more things; it's good for business*	*[On spiritual development] I do not have religion*
Zhou Zhong	*Political development is the most important because it* must *come before the others can improve. When politics improves then the social and economic conditions can improve, which results in a happier life in the cultural, spiritual and the*	*[On spiritual development] I have no religious belief*

	environment.	
Ruixin Huang	*I ranked cultural as first because without education it is not possible to do very* much	*The environment is just about keeping your own yard tidy. It does not matter as long as you keep your area clean.*
Cui Yongyun	*Everything in the village depends upon decision-making*	*[On spiritual development] It's just like entertainment*

Table 16 Respondents rationale for dimensional rankings

11.6 Quality perspective of development

Villagers rated the level of development of the village on a scale of zero (underdevelopment) to ten (advanced development). Using eight respondents, the average was eight. Villagers tended to perceive development as above average. When ranking *Tiantang* village, respondents took a longitudinal approach (except for Zhuang Sun who also took a comparative view across rural China), and gave their ranking rationale as overcoming the commune years and a much better life today. Breaking away from past hardships of the commune days (starvation, low income, poor housing and clothing, lack of cooking facilities, no land ownership) was deeply entrenched in villagers' understandings of development, as reflected in Table 17 below:

Name	*Ranking*	*Comment*
Bai Jiang	10	*When the PRC was first established, many people starved…one. Cultural Revolution…three...still many hardships. Household Responsibility System…eight…new opportunities.*
Liu Zhong	7	*The village is still very poor but it is developing really fast. After this development, it will be ten. Nowadays we have no problem eating or with clothing. We can eat enough, wear enough, and our beds are fine.*
Li Sun	9	*We had to overcome many hardships…life is much better today than it was in the past.*
Zhuang Sun	6	*Compared with the rest of China this village is a six…my father went through many difficult years in this village, so I give it a nine for the [historical] development.*
Zhou Zhong	9	*We used to burn wood for cooking. We had to collect wood and dry it before we could cook. It was very troublesome to cook.*
Huiming Yang	8	*The people in the village are always smiling; the people over 60 can get over 600 yuan per month for the sale of the land.*
Ruixin Huang	8	*The people's lives are getting better; there are more newly built houses; better incomes.*
Yulai Chu	6 or 7	

Table 17 Ranking of dimensions in *Tiantang* village

Liu Zhong's comment indicated the anticipation of better future development based upon the planned ancient village and new housing. What development often meant was modern facilities—significant aesthetic improvements to the village with modern buildings.

Analysis of village in relation to the literature

This section relates the results back to the literature review. It is an interpretation of whether or

not issues raised in the literature review related to the meanings of development discussed within the cultural milieu of the village.

11.7 Western theories of development

The stories indicated that there was no significant conceptualization of Western development. There appeared to be no meaningful historical associations with Western nations or foreigners in *Tiantang* village (however, in recent years some foreign tourists had visited the village). While villagers express a good deal of interest in Western development in terms of science and technology, trade and investment, agriculture, and democracy (in a limited sense), the concept of Western development had not been influential in this Chinese village context.

11.8 Chinese themes of development

11.8.1 Confucianism

Confucianism was directly identified in the stories of some villagers as being influential. Liu Zhong particularly discussed Confucian values in the context of education and linked "working hard", "study" and "earning money" with Confucian concepts of development. Another example could be found in the Zhou Zhong discussions, where he suggested that Confucian values were still highly valued today; such as "having good morals, being obedient, and being humble."

The literature review listed seven themes of Confucianism: Ritual, Rites and morality; Humaneness; Filial piety; Loyalty; Self-cultivation; Exemplary persons; and the Rectification of Names. Although these Confucian themes were not directly discussed as development, it seemed that they formed a part of the fabric of the cultural life across the households—a way that villagers sought to improve their lives. Apart from the latter theme, most of these values could be identified in the daily life and stories of villagers:

1) Ritual, rites and morality: As a guest in each household there appeared to be the etiquette of offering guests an invitation to lunch. Each household appeared to attach deep meanings to this, as some kind of cosmic and harmonious order of things. For example, Bai Jiang gave the example of harmonious society as about his household and a foreign guest sharing lunch. Moreover, whenever a gift was offered to a household, villagers would reciprocate with a gift (usually some fruit) as a ritualistic relational practice.

2) Humaneness: An example reverence and harmony in relationships was evident in the Huang discussions, where the worker from Yunnan province always deferred the discussion to his boss (giving due respect to Ruixin's seniority). Whenever discussions involved more than one respondent across the households, the junior parties always gave respect and honour to the senior person in the group.

3) Filial piety: Filial piety appeared to be quite strong in villagers' stories, where respondents often spoke of caring for children and grandchildren (concerning education, marriages, money gifts, and employment), and how children used their salaries to support parents. This theme was particularly evident during the Chinese New Year holiday when villagers gave ritualistic respect to deceased parents and grandparents.

4) Loyalty: The concept of loyalty appeared to be strong in relationships between some households and the local government concerning the proposed village relocation. In accordance with the concept of filial piety, proper respect must be shown to the officials, but the realpolitik in the minds of some villagers suggested that officials had to earn their right to govern (through proper behaviour). Whilst villagers disagreed with the relocation plan to make way for an ancient tourist village, they still tended to offer loyalty to officials and hoped that they could produce a fair settlement outcome. However, in the Sun household discussions it was evident that villagers may have been prepared to subvert local government (by going up the government chain of command) in the event that injustice occurred.

5) Self-cultivation: Self-cultivation was evident throughout every household. Villagers were eager to attain small improvements or life skills in daily life. This was also clear in the value that all households placed on education. Installing a gas stove, building a cabin, repairing a house, making rabbit cages, and learning about the seed and nut industry were ways that villagers cultivated themselves.

6) Exemplary persons: The concept of 'the gentleman' (saint, scholar, elite) appeared to be on display in the Liu and Zhou Zhong and Sun households, and to a lesser degree in others. Liu, Zhou Li seemed to view themselves as learned men (even with very limited formal education) and they also seemed to have a strong role-model attitude amongst their families and neighbours—like elite sages guiding people in the right way. These men did not appear to be selfish, greedy, superficial or materialistic in their attitudes, which were the opposite characteristics of what the Confucian concept of the gentleman entailed.

11.8.2 Daoism

Villagers did not make direct references to Daoism. Daoism was not a religion or philosophy that elderly villagers explicitly learned within their families before the Cultural Revolution. It also appeared that the Cultural Revolution had eradicated any sense of religion among the respondents (if it ever seriously existed). As the literature review noted Daoist belief as the energy behind all

things, it was difficult to determine by observation whether the Dao concepts of the *Dao* (the way), *De* (practical living of the Dao), *wuwei* (action without action), *Pu* (simplicity, of state of mind, uncomplicated), and Spirituality, had anything to do with the way of life in the village. It certainly did not exist as a religion (the temples in the *Suhe* Township were Buddhist), and villagers did not rank spirituality as being important for development. Having said that, villagers claimed to be poorly educated and therefore they could not be expected to discuss religious tenets of Daoist belief. This does not mean that villagers were not living according to Daoist principles, but that any knowledge of Daoist philosophy historically would have been taught by elites, usually the government. There seemed to be notable examples of Daoist attitudes in the stories. The first was in the Liu Zhong household, when Liu tried to bargain the price with the rickshaw driver. In this case, we saw two parties haggling for the middle ground for the fare: many villagers became involved and it could be argued that in this incident, both parties were looking for the *Dao* (the right way) and the *De* (living according to the *Dao*). It may also be argued that in the relocation dispute, local officials were demonstrating *wuwei*, action without inaction. They did not want trouble to escalate so they put negotiations on hold for another occasion, to wait and see what would occur. The Daoist concept of *Pu* may have been evident in the Jiang household where Bai did not want to discuss complicated issues. While it seemed that villagers were concerned with living a right way, it did not appear to be connected explicitly with a concept of *Dao*, but more closely through Confucian ethical principles and duty. Nevertheless, although villagers did not relate Daoism directly with development, it cannot r be dismissed all together as absent from the village cultural fabric.

11.8.3 Buddhism

Buddhism was only discussed as a belief in the Huang household. As this household was from Zhejiang province, no real generalization could be made within the village case. The respondents did not appear to believe in Buddhism as a committed daily practice. It was discussed as more of a tradition or superstition. Yulai Chu suggested that "You cannot believe it all but you cannot ignore it either". It appeared that Yulai was concerned that, even though Buddhism was hard to believe, if he did not hold Buddhist beliefs, he would miss out on a benefit or blessing. (This attitude was also evident in the Sun household demonstration of ancestral worship, where they practiced the rituals but had no strong conviction about the practice). Ruixin said that he visited the Buddhist temple while on holidays and that he prayed on those occasions for fortune for his family (but he could not say who he prayed to). This superstitious belief in Buddhism was supported in the Qi household, where Cui Yongyun joked that going to the temple—referring to the three temples in *Suhe* tourist town—was just like fun and entertainment for holidays. Cui suggested that it was something that people who could afford to travel would do. Buddhism was not a theme of development discussed across the households.

11.8.4 Nationalism

Nationalism was a moderate theme of development; but discussed with passion in the Zhong households. It was discussed as the desire for China to return to its glorious past of a respected and leading nation in the world. There was a sense of shame about the Mao era and how China had slipped well behind other nations. Liu Zhong indicated that the Tang Dynasty was an ideal time in China's history because China was not looked down upon by other nations. Villagers' stories showed a belief that China was on the rise again as a great nation. There was confidence that it was returning to its position as a powerful nation.

Despite confidence in their great civilization, there was also a feeling of inferiority at times among respondents: that the West was better. Zhou Zhong expressed his desire that the Chinese people not give up on goals, unlike the people of the West. Moreover, in both Zhong households, constant comparisons were made between China (or *Tiantang* village) and life in Australia, and in the West. At times, these enquiries were mere curiosity, asked from a position of confidence in China's growth, but behind this there seemed to be the attitude of "we want to catch up". Liu Zhong expressed the desire for China to catch up when discussing the 2008 Olympic Games (discussing the Games as a symbol of strength, of China's rise, and the sporting performances of the Chinese athletes).

Even though the concept of development appeared to be predominantly localized, national pride was an important part of development for some villagers. Nationalism in several households was closely aligned with the economic and political might of the nation and linked to China's past glory days.

11.8.5 Soviet communism

Soviet communism was not discussed directly. However, several villagers discussed the hardships of working under the commune system: the starvation, lack of wealth, beatings, lack of education, to name a few. It is fair to assert that the Soviet Communist ideal of the commune represented underdevelopment and backwardness; a time when development in *Tiantang* village was not occurring.

11.8.6 Maoism

The Mao era and the ideals of Maoism were not discussed as development. On the whole, the Mao era was viewed as a negative and forgettable time. When villagers spoke about Mao or the Mao era, it was mostly done with bitterness, but they were eager to talk about it nevertheless. In the last discussion with Liu and Zhou Zhong, they agreed (with each other) not to talk negatively about Mao for fear of upsetting the Communist Party (but in previous discussions they indicated that the time under Mao was horrible). As mentioned in the section above, working in the

commune system had no meaningful connection with development; it was considered by all villagers as a time of severe hardship. It is evident in the stories that there was no freedom for villagers under Mao in terms of doing business, education, and being socially mobile and that these issues were very important aspects of development. However, the attitude toward Mao was not all negative. Several villagers discussed the raised status of women as something that Mao achieved in China and in the village context. Yet it was evident that the Mao era represented a time that was best left behind, and discussed as a time when development was not happening, with villagers having little incentive to work and without much hope for improvement.

11.8.7 Dengism

The Deng era and Dengism were viewed as a turning point. Deng Xiaoping was extolled by many villagers throughout the discussions. It may have been that villagers held him in high regard because he was Sichuanese, but they spoke about Deng more in terms of what he had done for them through deregulation policies, particularly with the introduction of the Household Responsibility System in 1979. This was evident in the historical perspective section earlier in this chapter, where villagers contrasted vast improvements in food security, housing, clothing, education and working conditions, to name a few, between Mao and Deng and the present life. Bo Qi summarised this feeling best when he said, "I love Deng the best…Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao have just followed Deng…Without Deng we would not have this life today." Cao Wei was another villager who held Deng in high regard, almost with an emperor-like status. In the middle of Cao's shrine-like lounge was a large picture of Deng. Deng appeared to be associated with a happy life for villagers; in the minds of many, he was responsible for transforming village life from one of misery to happiness and opportunity.

Villagers seemed to conceptualize development under Deng as a clear break and discontinuity from the harsh days of Mao. Deng often appeared to be synonymous with the term 'opening up', a time when many villagers to found greater opportunities in business, education, and migration to urban centres.

11.8.8 The Three Represents

Villagers did not explicitly refer to The Three Represents or Jiang Zemin as being influential in village life. Jiang did not appear to be a significant figure or agent for development within the stories, but he was not spoken of in negative terms either. Bo Qi said that Jiang just followed what Deng started. It seemed that villagers did not perceive any developmental shifts under Jiang's leadership.

11.8.9 Scientific Development Concept

Villagers did not explicitly mention the Hu's Scientific Development Concept (SDC), but they did

discuss some concepts of this policy. It was noted in the literature review that the SDC was multi-dimensional (political, economic, social, environmental), people-centred rather than having an economic growth emphasis, and with an emphasis on *xiaokang* and social stability. In theory, it appeared that some villagers were aware of these concepts. For example, several respondents believed that they now lived in a *xiaokang* society. This was discussed as harmony and peace in society (no criminals) as well as everyone generally having enough. Zhou Zhong viewed *xiaokang* as being a stepping-stone to harmonious society, with the former being economic and the latter associated with the higher matters of political and cultural development. Bai Jiang spoke about harmonious society as a future time when everyone would live in peace, according to the concept of the *Datong* (or grand unity). Villagers also believed that some form of democracy was occurring through the village elections, even though they did not trust its implementation or find it useful. However, views on democracy did not extend to an awareness of a rights-based concept of development and justice. Social security was also a means by which some villagers perceived harmony; the bridging of economic gaps in society.

The stories suggested that SDC ideals were not yet being practiced. For example, Hu's emphasis on the rule of law and rights-based approaches were not at play in the relocation negotiations. Development did not particularly appear to be people-centred, with villagers' stories revealing a strong dependency on local government to initiate development. Enterprise appeared to be controlled by local government with villagers merely following its lead. It was apparent that local government was taking a trickle-down economic growth focus in that it went about the business of tourism (the plan for the extension of the ancient town) in the hope that whatever flowed from this into the life of village was development. It was not people-centred or particularly multi-dimensional.

While the principles of the SDC seemed evident, they had not been fully realized. It was not clear whether villagers had been educated in SDC technicalities, or whether they even aware of the SDC.

11.8.10 Supranational influences

There was no concept of supranational influence in the village. When asked about the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank in the final Zhou Zhong household discussion, Cao Wei and Zhou Zhong indicated that they were not aware of these organisations. It was not raised in other households.

11.8.12 Non-Government Organisations

NGOs as representing development did not emerge in the discussions. Indeed, villagers had a incorrect knowledge of NGOs. In the Bo household, NGOs were considered to be an enemy of the

state, like gangsters, and Cao Wei understood NGOs as past illegal *falungong* activity in the village. These examples indicated that villagers viewed development as a government responsibility, and believed that other organisations should not be involved with development.

11.9 Dimensions of development in Chinese village life

This section is an interpretation of the various dimensions of development discussed within households. Whilst it is recognized that interpretations cannot always be placed into clear-cut categories—some topics cross into various dimensions—the categories indicate the main issues for each dimension. The dimensions are discussed in order of the combined household rankings for the village, from most important to the least important.

11.9.1 Cultural

Cultural development was mainly discussed as education, and only a few times with reference to regular events in the daily life of the village. Although many villagers were elderly, and did not have an opportunity for high-level education, they were very eager for children and grandchildren to receive good quality education. Some reasons behind the educational emphasis were that it would enable family members to attain good employment, earn a better salary, and have power and influence in Chinese society, and because it brought household status (so grandparents could boast to friends and others about talented family members). Without a good educational background villagers seemed to be limited in their working lives and this was a major regret in the Huang household. Ruixin Huang often indicated that although he had done well in business, he was now bored with his beekeeping business and would like to have done other work but for his lack of education. Yulai Chu also lamented that he could not achieve more because he only had a primary school level education. In his thirties, he was still eager for a computer skills education to enhance employment prospects.

Elderly respondents discussed education in personal terms as being the ability to achieve small tasks—apart from the views of a cultured/educated person being someone with a formal university qualification. This subtheme possibly came from an underlying disappointment over lost education during the Mao era. It was apparent that elderly respondents saw daily tasks such as home repairs, craftwork, being able to conduct small business, and the building of a cabin in the orchard (in the Li Sun case), as evidence that they were educated people. Elderly respondents wanted to feel that they were cultured, useful people.

Education emerged through the stories as being very important in the life of households, in the village, and for the development of the nation as a whole. This indicated that there were strong Confucian values at the core of cultural life of the village. It was also interesting that the *Suhe* ancient tourist town was not discussed explicitly in terms of cultural development; it appeared that villagers saw it mainly as a site of economic development.

11.9.2 Economic

Economic development centred upon the idea of a trickle-down of benefits from the national economy, but more particularly upon the growth of local enterprise and tourism industry. It also seemed that agriculture had been slowly declining over the reform period as the major source of income generated within the *Tiantang* village economy. The expansion of the *Suhe* ancient tourist town was regarded as being responsible for greater economic opportunities and markets for villagers. Other sources of income came from young people who had migrated to urban areas in search of job opportunities, sending monthly payments back to support elderly parents. However, this had also taken social capital away from the village. Householders had much better incomes today and this led some to believe that income inequalities between rural and urban areas were closing. With the introduction of social security pensions in conjunction with the relocation of land, the perception of many villagers was that the national and local economy was doing very well. Confidence was generally high. As the villagers observed the success of the ancient tourist town, they anticipated that economic development—meaning modern projects and buildings—would soon be arriving in their village.

The *Suhe* ancient tourist town enterprise, according to Bo Qi, the village leader, was a privately owned enterprise. However, the political arrangement in *Siping* County appeared to be one of strong control and governance. Several villagers cited better infrastructure as well as the ancient tourist town as being major factors for growth in the *Tiantang* village economy, as this had reduced the village's remoteness and provided greater access to *Xiguan* city. Nevertheless, there were no large enterprises in *Tiantang*.

Bai Jiang offered an example of a businessman who had accessed business opportunities outside the village—through a relative—to sell goods within the local economy. Bai travelled regularly to a supplier in *Xiguan* to replenish stock. Whilst many villagers like Bai ran individual businesses, they were small scale and operated at street market level only. Villagers relied on tourists who came to the ancient town passing through the village street market, for increases in business revenue.

Business occurred in *Tiantang* according to the *Suhe* government's control of markets. Market access control was evident in that villagers had been denied access to the ancient tourist town site, a place where they had traditionally sold agricultural produce for two hundred years. However, flexible enterprise arrangements had created greater freedoms than experienced during the commune system (such as flexible working hours and choice of work), despite evidence that a totally free market did not exist (even when evicted from the *Suhe* ancient town markets, villagers were required to fight officials to keep their street market alive). It was also interesting that the villagers collectively owned the cemetery, with revenue paid to registered household members

annually at 400 *yuan* each; there were still signs of the village collective enterprise. Another example of a collective was the volunteer brigade that the government had established to offer part-time work for villagers wanting to keep active and earn small income doing public works.

11.9.3 Political

Political development in *Tiantang* village appeared to be closer to the Wuxi, Jiangsu province example (controlled elections and governance) in the literature review than the Wenzhou, Zhejiang province example (competitive elections and enterprise). There were indications in villagers' stories that *Tiantang* village was controlled by upper levels of government, and that conditions prior to reforms were of strong local level governance. Although the commune was dismantled in 1979 (and Organic Laws introduced in 1987 and 1998), it appeared that political development had occurred only in form but not in substance. This was evident on two fronts.

First, the elections, although a part of the reforms, did not appear to be free and fair. Villagers believed that elections were rigged and therefore did not take them seriously. Even so, some villagers did not show too much indignation about this because their livelihoods had been improving over time. There was one particular exception. Even though the Organic Laws state that candidacy for village elections are open to all villagers over the age of 18, Li Sun expressed disappointment that he was not permitted to participate as a candidate. Li suggested that he needed money and power to run as a candidate. The apparent lack of democratic process stood in stark contrast to those in the Wenzhou villages of Zhejiang province, where elections have been celebrated like festivals and where villagers have had autonomy and the right to elect and be elected.

On the second point, it appeared that the village representative assembly—the body through which real democratic changes take place—had not gone far enough to bring about a functional village democracy. Some villagers wanted a freer and fairer form of election whereby candidates were required to earn votes based on an open platform. The apparent lack of transparent electoral processes indicated that the village representative assembly had not been successful in cultivating a culture of democracy or political awareness (or it could suggest that there was corruption in the local government). For example, it appeared that villagers had not been aware of property rights under the Organic Laws (even though they managed to stall the relocation plans of the local government effectively). Zhou Zhong was not aware of the Organic Laws (and it was possible that other villagers may not have been politically aware of village legislation). During the household discussions, it became evident that villagers had a strong dependency on leaders to make changes, more so than possessing a sense of ownership over their own lives as citizens.

It could be argued that traditional and natural ways were the means by which political causes were achieved because villagers might not have understood the Organic Laws, and because local

officials might not have implemented these laws effectively. The stories indicated that although leaders seemed to gain office through power, wealth, and patronage, villagers were prepared to resist unfairness through solidarity and group power if required. While a lack of understanding of the technicalities of the law could have been a barrier for villagers, they were wise concerning their rights through the Confucian principle of the "Mandate of Heaven"; they had a sense of the justification of opposing abuses of leadership that threatened livelihoods.

Political development in this village had not yet reached full legal compliance with the central government's aims of grassroots democracy, or the wishes of villagers, but the negotiations between some villagers and the local government on the village relocation and property rights suggested that natural democracy and fairness were occurring to some degree. A folk and deliberative style of democracy seemed to be evident in the daily life of the village. Politics was very pragmatic and seemingly localized in this case study (as long as the centre was not bothered). It may be true that "heaven is high and the emperor is far away" when it came to *Tiantang* village's political development. The rule seemed to be to live in harmony and peace within the village and to try to resolve conflicts before they escalate to higher levels.

11.9.4 Social

When respondents first spoke on social development there was confusion about what 'social' meant. Villagers seemingly did not hold a concept of social development. After discussing some of the items on the menu such as health, the *Hukou* System, the One-Child policy, and the status of women, it was still difficult to determine whether what was being discussed had any connection with the social dimension of development. However, as the fieldwork progressed it appeared that 'social' had a connection with social status or 'face'. The social seemed to be closely linked with economic wellbeing as well as political power and influence—the ability to achieve things within the community because of wealth, power and influence. Across most households, having a member that was university educated raised the household's status. This was particularly evident in the Liu and Zhou Zhong, and the Sun household discussions, all of which talked about the importance of their household's social standing.

It could be suggested that the social dimension of development cut across the political, economic and cultural dimensions of development in *Tiantang* village. In other words, to be educated was to be cultured, which enabled greater opportunities for power and influence, which enhanced the opportunities for greater wealth. However, the stories indicated that most educated people had left the village for better opportunities in urban areas.

It was possible that villagers could raise their social standing without a formal university education, but this was rare. Qing Zhong had risen to become the boss of a large brick-making enterprise outside the village within *Siping* County. Qing achieved this with hard work and a good

personality rather than by a good education background. Qing's Party membership might have been a factor in his leadership position, but he tactfully indicated it had no influence. Other family members regularly boasted about Qing's employment as the boss of the enterprise. This appeared to be what social development was about in village households.

(Note: The wealthy Party Secretary, in his 40s, also did not have a university education)

The meaning of social development within the village was linked to perceptions and realities of the individual and the household's social status.

11.9.5 Environmental

Environmental development seemed to have two aspects: the quality of air and water, and the aesthetics of the village. Respondents viewed the former as being important for sustainable livelihoods (employment associated with the river), health (air pollution-generated illnesses) and food security (quality of marine life). It was interesting that some villagers spoke on the environment in association with the village's appearance. In the Huang case, Ruixin discussed the environment as the responsibility to keep residential areas clean. However, this household also discussed the enjoyment of working in countryside fresh air. In the Sun household, Li spoke of the environment as the plan to make the village look modern with the beautification of the riverbank and modern buildings.

Although environmental development was ranked fifth by respondents within the six dimensions of development, villagers indicated that they enjoyed good quality air. Households understood the importance of controlling air pollution for sustainable development and quality of life.

11.9.6 Spiritual

Religion (or spirituality) was not regarded as a major factor for development. Most respondents indicated they either did not have a religion or a belief in a god. Exceptions were found within the Huang household, where both Ruixin and Yulai spoke about a Buddhist belief, although it was perhaps more about superstition than a practice of spirituality. It appeared that these respondents practiced Buddhism rather loosely, not as a serious pursuit of truth. Overall, the stories suggested that religious belief was something people did as a part of tradition or as tourism (to attend temples during holidays to pray for good luck and fortune). In the case of the Huang household, it had potential to bring mystical benefits, but the respondents appeared to be more agnostic than anything else.

Ancestral worship was more widespread across the households and practiced over the Chinese New Year. It emerged throughout the discussions that it was not related to religion or spirituality, but about respect and remembering ancestors (more to do with cultural and psychological factors). This became clearer during a Sun household discussion—when I observed an ancestral worship

ceremony. During this ceremony, Li and Zhuang explained that they burned money so ancestors could live a comfortable life in the next world, but later Li commented that he did not believe in a spiritual world and that he was performing this rite as a tradition (and also to show other villagers that he had ancestors in that place). It appeared to be more of a cultural pattern than a spiritual act of worshipping familial spirits.

Although not holding concepts of the spiritual, spiritual development was also discussed as temple revival in the form of the three Buddhist temples in the *Suhe* ancient tourist town. They were used as an example of one of the freedoms people were able to enjoy in the post-Mao era. Some respondents mentioned that there was a Catholic church in the county on the other side of the river, but no places of religious worship were evident in *Tiantang* village. Villagers were largely atheistic, and the concept of the spiritual did not appear to be meaningful for individual or community development.

11.10 Summary

The stories of villagers revealed that the improvement in the necessities of life had been a very significant matter. Deng Xiaoping and his reforms were largely praised as the reason behind improvements in food security, housing, clothing, which were associated with ‘better conditions’ and ‘happier life’. These items represented development because they were about basic human dignity.

Along with credit to Deng’s reforms, villagers held the perception that a growing Chinese economy had trickled-down to their village, and the benefits being enjoyed today were reducing rural-urban wealth disparities. China was considered to be a *xiaokang* society. The concept of development in *Tiantang* village was at times understood in proportion to national growth, but development was predominantly discussed in local and existential terms.

In this local context, the model of *Tiantang* village development was overwhelmingly government-led (controlled) but its economy was driven by a Town and Village Enterprise in neighbouring *Fugui* County. *Tiantang* villagers looked to the *Suhe* tourist town with envy, because their once prosperous agricultural advantage had been lost without the emergence of their own large-scale enterprise. Although *Tiantang* villagers held some hope for a future large-scale tourist town, there was a lack of trust of local level officials among some (mainly wealthier) villagers that they would receive fair relocation compensation.

In this dispute, a significant meaning of development emerged; that development had a great deal to do with social status on a personal and household level. To lose wealth in negotiations with officials would represent a loss of status and face in the community. It was evident that a loss of wealth would be considered a great shame, a very serious matter.

Deeply connected with social status was the strong emphasis on education. Education was a

means by which villagers could be better employed and earn higher incomes, gain influence and power, and bring pride to a household. In a way it indicated that the household operated as a mini economy within itself; as the primary site of meanings of development ahead of the community and perhaps nation. Nevertheless, households understood that development involved building good relations within Chinese society, and it was evident that Confucian values played a large part in the way that villagers attempted to improve their lives (with the trust of the central government and the attitude of following the leaders appearing as significant in the stories). The meaning of development in *Tiantang* village was complex and multifaceted but appeared to be achieved through a mixture of strong political governance and a traditional way of doing things.

Development in villagers' lives was about moment by moment adaptation and assimilation of the things that made life better. One sensed from the stories that every moment or encounter was an opportunity for transformation. The ability to do things brought happiness. Life in *Tiantang* village was like a series of rites to be performed for the betterment of self and society. This may have been why hosting a foreigner held particular importance for villagers; it was potentially an occasion for connection and improvement.

Although modern buildings were replacing the old in the *Suhe* area, and were discussed as symbolic of development, the actions of the average Han villager in *Tiantang* village was Confucian and traditional. The new buildings symbolized wealth and status, and this gave the average villager the sense of national pride, and the hope for an improved household economy. Villagers perceived this local modernisation as Chinese modernisation, not Western, but they acknowledged that the new found wealth would not have been possible without China's integration into the global economy, without Deng Xiaoping and foreign influences.

The next chapter is the discussion chapter. It looks at points of convergence and divergence of themes across households.

Chapter 12 - Discussion

12.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the points of convergence and divergence from the results chapter. It indicates that development was very difficult to define in *Tiantang* village. Meanings of development were different from one household to the next, and understood from different levels within the village milieu. 'Development' even shifted from one meaning to the next within a single household or within a single interview. Yet although it could be asserted that there were many meanings of development within *Tiantang* village, there were singular strong themes identified as underpinning development across the households.

12.2 Development as existential knowledge for the common villager

Villagers' stories indicated that meanings of development were formed within the natural dimension of village life rather than through complex and abstract development programmes or governmental structures—not structured but free flowing. Villagers discussed their stories of development in a very relational rather than ideological way, so Western theories or Chinese government legislation and policy only became meaningful to the villager in the way that the local officials implemented them (related with villagers) in the daily vicissitudes of life. Despite embracing the idea of acquiring modern buildings and facilities in their village (and strongly indicating that this was about development), villagers appeared to understand development from a traditional Confucian view in everyday life, with the modern and tangible aspects of development appearing to be merely symbolic and connected with nationalism, social standing and esteem. At times, villagers appeared to be ambivalent about material items: they had an aesthetic appreciation of their village (and hoped for this to improve), but they were not particularly materialistic within their households. Modernisation was not necessarily about becoming more Western but villagers had openness to adopting Western ideas and making them fit within their traditional Chinese way of life. Villagers' views of development seemed to be predominantly rooted in centuries-old philosophies of their grand civilisation, with Confucianism as the most obvious. It was a very adaptable approach, full of social rituals and obligations. It understood life as constantly moving and changing in spite of administrative structures, policies and patterns fixed in place from above.

This study confirmed propositions in the literature review that China's villages were unique and culturally dynamic within the local context. In other words, this study suggested that there was no typical meaning of development between the village and the surrounding areas. Various patterns of development from above influenced *Tiantang* village in a different way to *Suhe* Township villages. Even in adjacent villages in rural Sichuan, local governments seemed to hold very different views of how development should occur (the wealth of the ancient town village had increased over the past few decades whilst the agricultural-reliant village of *Tiantang*, and indeed

its county, fell behind). Within any given village, it seemed that average Han villagers would either benefit from entrepreneurial officials, or be adversely affected by the lack of entrepreneurially-talented (or corrupted) officials. As indicated in the literature, urban migration seemed to be the solution to the villager's dilemma when lack of development adversely affected them, particularly with the younger residents (keeping in mind that it may have been a deliberate plan of local government to shift residents from rural areas to the urban nevertheless).

12.3 Layers of the conceptualisation of development

Table 18 summarises three levels in which development occurred in *Tiantang* village. It was caste-like in that each level understood its role and knew not to intrude too much into other levels. The middle level was more of a link between government and villagers, but the stories indicated a sharp divide between the inner circle of government and the common villager. The government level seemed to be the Party Secretary and whomever he held *guanxi*. It was considered to be higher level culture that knew what was best for villagers. (Even though the Party Secretary had no higher education, he was very wealthy, and most likely had government connections beyond the village). Although there were signs that government policy had often been well implemented in the village, the village relocation dispute and the conduct of the village elections revealed that the Party Secretary also ruled by patronage and traditional means.

The typical villager was uneducated and deferred all matters to leaders: villagers were followers. Villagers considered development to be the role of government, so they often spoke as though their opinion was not particularly important. Some villagers generally avoided discussions about government policy because it was not their place to discuss it, did not know anything about it and were therefore embarrassed about their low education background, or did not particularly care because it did not directly affect them. It seemed to be the wealthier villagers, such as Li Sun and Zhou Zhong, who had more knowledge and the confidence to speak about local government and policy. Most villagers held little power to change their lives despite enjoying greater freedoms after Mao. Although they were a part of the Chinese nation, and held rights under Chinese law, it seemed that they were a class outside the system. The stories show a desire for *guanxi* to improve lives, yet it was clear that villagers' businesses were prevented from becoming too large or influential. Businesses were run at the household level only, very small-scale, with market access being the local street market. The exception was in the Qi household. Bo Qi was one of several village leaders at level two (neither a Party member nor fully on the side of the common villager), who was close to the inner circle and appeared to be going to benefit handsomely in the coming years from the building of a new ancient town.

TIANTANG VILLAGE	**Level 1** Centre-Township/village connection (High Culture); Village Party Secretary as the lowest level of the system (village exemplar); Traditional values (Confucian-educated: *guanxi*, face) and CCP Policy; State-Owned Enterprises - cemetery (collective); planned ancient tourist town (tourist zone).
	Level 2 Village Committee (link between Chinese system and peasants) consisting of Party Secretary and Peasant entrepreneurs (village representatives).
	Level 3 Common Households (Low culture- uneducated, no knowledge of policy, follow the leaders); Outside the system but part of the nation (rights but no political power); Folk culture (household based - Mahjong, cards); no *guanxi* or face; Street Market (Farming - small plots, craftwork, rickshaw drivers, small business).

Table 18 Levels with *Tiantang* village

12.4 Meanings of development across households

There was a variety of meanings across household cases:

Household	*Meanings of development*
Jiang	*Happiness*: associated with food security, clothing, housing, transport and infrastructure, work conditions, good leadership, social security; and access to markets. Perceived historical improvements occurring after introduction of Household Responsibility System. Development mainly about improved household conditions linked to seed and nut business.
Sun	*"Good governance"*: implementation of good policy (transparency over relocation negotiations and village election), education/social status, *guanxi*, and access to markets. Spatial perspectives that made comparisons with *Fugui* county. Historical improvements associated with Deng Xiaoping, and particularly the Household Responsibility System.
Liu Zhong	*"A better life"*: associated with food security; housing; household goods (fridge, gas stove) and services (gas); education/social status/opportunity; modern buildings, public transport and infrastructure, foreign science and technology/China's growth and re-emergence (power and influence); nationalism. Cao Wei was strong on freedoms gained after Mao era (freedom from abuse). Spatial perspectives that extended beyond household and village to national level. Development connected with others and less about household.
Zhou Zhong	*"Happiness"*: associated with food security; clothing; housing; household income (social security); education/social status; and tourism/opportunity. Numerous spatial comparisons made from village, to township, to county, to provincial, to international. Moderate on historical development perspectives (mainly about basic needs).
Huang	*"Better business":* environment (that supports transient bee keeping business); education; access to markets (local and global); women's status (Huiming Yang); urban-rural income disparities (Yulai Chu). Spatial comparisons made between *Tiantang* village and village in Zhejiang

	(wealthier, hardworking). Spatial perspective mainly on family and household income, but business discussed laterally.
Qi	*"The life standard is improving"*: food security; tourism (ancient tourist town plans), infrastructure; women's status; better business. Historical perspectives associated with Deng Xiaoping, particularly freedom from hardships of commune days (hard work with low income).

Each household had a unique understanding of development depending on its background, level of wealth, interests, and livelihoods. Development was defined as happiness in two households, but this also meant different things between the two (ability and food security/clothing in one; and food security/clothing and working conditions in the other). What was agreed across the households was that life was better after Mao; that *Tiantang* village and its households were well advanced compared to pre-reform days.

12.5 Cultural development as dominant dimension

Results showed that cultural development was the most important dimension of development. In the ranking survey, cultural development was slightly ahead of economic then political development. While we cannot take too much from this small sample, when compared with villagers stories it supports the assertion that culture/education was perceived as driving other aspects of development. Every household spoke about culture as 'being educated' and education as important whether they possessed a good educational background or not. Some overtly lamented over a lost education during the Mao days, whilst others apologised for their lack of education. It was clear that education made things possible: it provided greater capabilities, provided social status for individuals and households, it enabled opportunities for better employment and connections, and it was the reason behind China's economic success.

12.6 What development was not

Villagers did not understand development in terms of spiritual matters, abstract policy and rules, or esoteric philosophical knowledge. Most respondents ranked spiritual development as the least important dimension of development. It is fair to suggest that atheism was the religion of the village. Religion was considered as something that might bring good luck or fortune and something that the wealthy might do on a vacation, but not as a daily search for truth and meaning. Ancestral worship at first seemed to be about spiritual matters, but it was a practice based on cultural tradition rather than religion. Villagers did not pay too much attention to government policy that did not directly intrude upon their lives. This was evident in the discourse on the village election, where villagers said they did not care, or that it did not matter. On the other hand, the policy to relocate villagers was a passionate issue because it threatened the wealth of several households. Villagers did not discuss philosophical issues of development, but there were signs that behaviour in daily life stemmed from centuries-old Confucian philosophy. Villagers discussed Confucianism in connection with development, rather than Daoism or

Buddhism, but not too often. Yet, the attitude of following the leaders, trusting the leaders (the ones with the high culture and knowledge), was strongly implicit in the stories. Higher (abstract) matters of development and government were not considered as discussion points for people with low education who seemed to sit outside the system.

Face and *guanxi*

It was evident that 'face' and *guanxi* were important traditional notions of development. These issues where particularly notable in the relocation negotiations some villagers were having with local officials. Face was connected with the idea that households did not want to go backwards in status and reputation in the eyes of the community. Villagers wanted to preserve face at all costs. But face was also evident in that no one wanted others to lose face either, so the negotiations were proceeding very cautiously and carefully between the government and common villager levels. *Guanxi* was also important for villagers in the negotiations, but the Sun household study showed that even a wealthy businessman did not have the power to influence government or find a powerful advocate for villagers. Common villagers had no *guanxi* to defend themselves from relocation, or unfair compensation. It seemed that face and *guanxi* were only available at either level one or two of the village. In other words, those in the inner circle of government or close to it could acquire face and *guanxi*. The stories indicated that a higher education was a means to acquire face and *guanxi*, but Qing Zhong (a Party member and brick-making factory manager), and the village Party Secretary—both middle aged men—had good face and *guanxi* without a university education.

12.7 Conclusion

The meaning of development was hard to define in *Tiantang* village. Development was a fluid concept with many layers of meanings. But the following points may be noted:

1) Face and *guanxi* were important for villagers but not easy to get for common villagers;

2) Education/culture was a driver of development regardless of whether villagers had a good educational background;

3) Deng Xiaoping and/or central government reform policies were perceived as the catalyst for development in households and village;

4) Development was not really about matters beyond the common villagers' daily spheres of existence, but rather about moment by moment opportunities (relational and traditional);

5) There was a variety of meanings across the village depending on the household's position in the caste-like village milieu;

6) Development was government-led, but leaders also acted in traditional ways.

Chapter 13 – Conclusion

This thesis began with the aim of identifying the meaning of development in a Chinese village context. The idea was to spend as much time as necessary in a randomly selected Chinese village in Western China to tease out thick and rich narratives on 'development' from average Han villagers. Having visited six households in a Sichuan village over six months, 'development' proved to be a multi-layered, multi-faceted topic. There were meanings of development rather than one singular identifiable meaning, even though education/culture was a topic that every villager spoke in-depth on. It would be fair to suggest that it underpinned many stories. Education was synonymous with culture which was synonymous with traditional Confucian values. Such knowledge may not seem to present deep insights into the Chinese village. Most literature on Chinese culture has suggested that Confucian values and education lie at the core of this ancient civilisation, so in the context of the modern China—the 'globally integrated' China—it may have interesting implications if this were true on a larger scale across village China. It would raise the question as to whether rural China is really globally integrated, as some might like (or hope) to believe.

This study also showed that villagers appeared to be at the bottom of a caste-like system. There were the separate worlds of Chinese political system ruled by the Communist Party (the village Party Secretary), and the common villager. Accordingly, there was no concept (or practice) of the free market: it was a government-led economy. Although there were more freedoms for common villagers in the reform era, this Chinese village economy had been stunted by the tight grip of local officials. This too would have implications if found to be widespread across rural China. The desire for free markets was a clearly an issue in this study.

Each household had its history and therefore its own understanding of the meaning of development. Those classified as landlords under Mao had a different perspective on development than former peasants. Former landlords were wealthier and had a vested interest in the village relocation negotiations, while former peasants kept to themselves, did their business and had a small sphere of influence. Over the course of time, these labels had come to bear no meaning, but they had influenced villagers' spatial and historical perspectives on development. There were different businesses, interests, age groups and backgrounds, which highlighted the point that there was not so much one meaning of development, but many meanings in comparison with the Maoist political economy past. The notion of the Chinese village as a diverse, free-flowing milieu has implications for businesses and development work in rural China, as it shows that each household and village perhaps needs to be understood on its own terms.

Villagers discussed development in their daily lives in existential terms. Development was about the things that had or could make a positive impact in their household, or the avoidance of things

that could adversely affect them. Patterns of development from above (development programmes, ideologies, theories, legislation, NGOs) had no real meaning in the life of the average *Tiantang* villager unless it had had a real tangible effect. This suggests that outsiders need to work with Chinese villagers on a relational and personal basis and less so according to the abstract. Villagers assimilated 'development' on a moment-by-moment basis. This was why food security and modern buildings were both 'development', while democracy and the twelfth five-year plan were not.

The results of this study cannot be generalised. The intention was that a single Chinese village be studied as an in-depth, intrinsic case study to identify the rich meaning of development. Stories told within the six households of *Tiantang* village provided diverse meanings of development but they also painted a picture of the village entity. It is hoped that the meanings of development revealed in this study can be tested in other Chinese rural villages so that the jigsaw puzzle of development in rural China can be better understood.

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